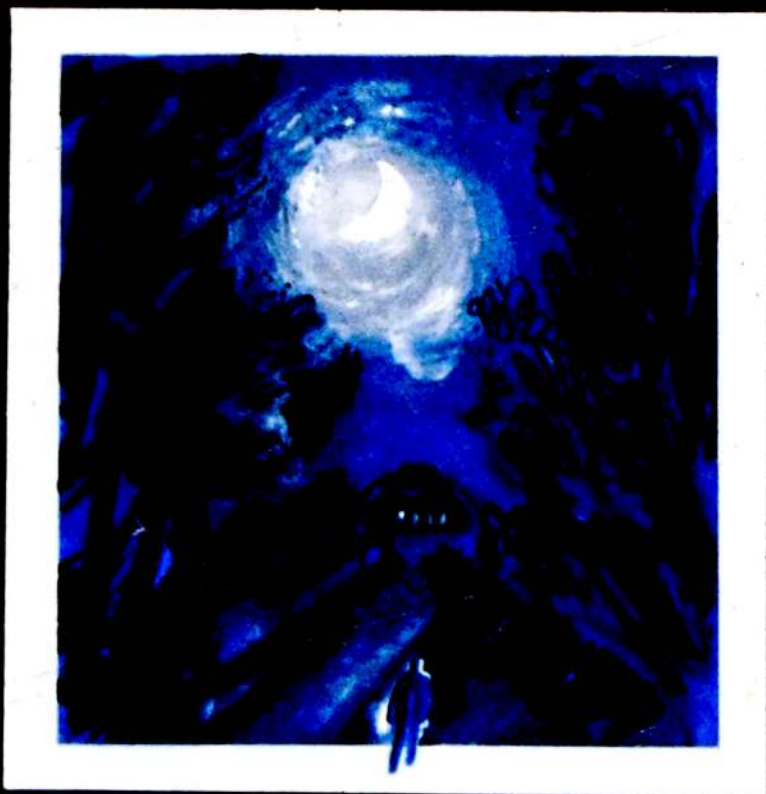


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TALES
AND
FABLES



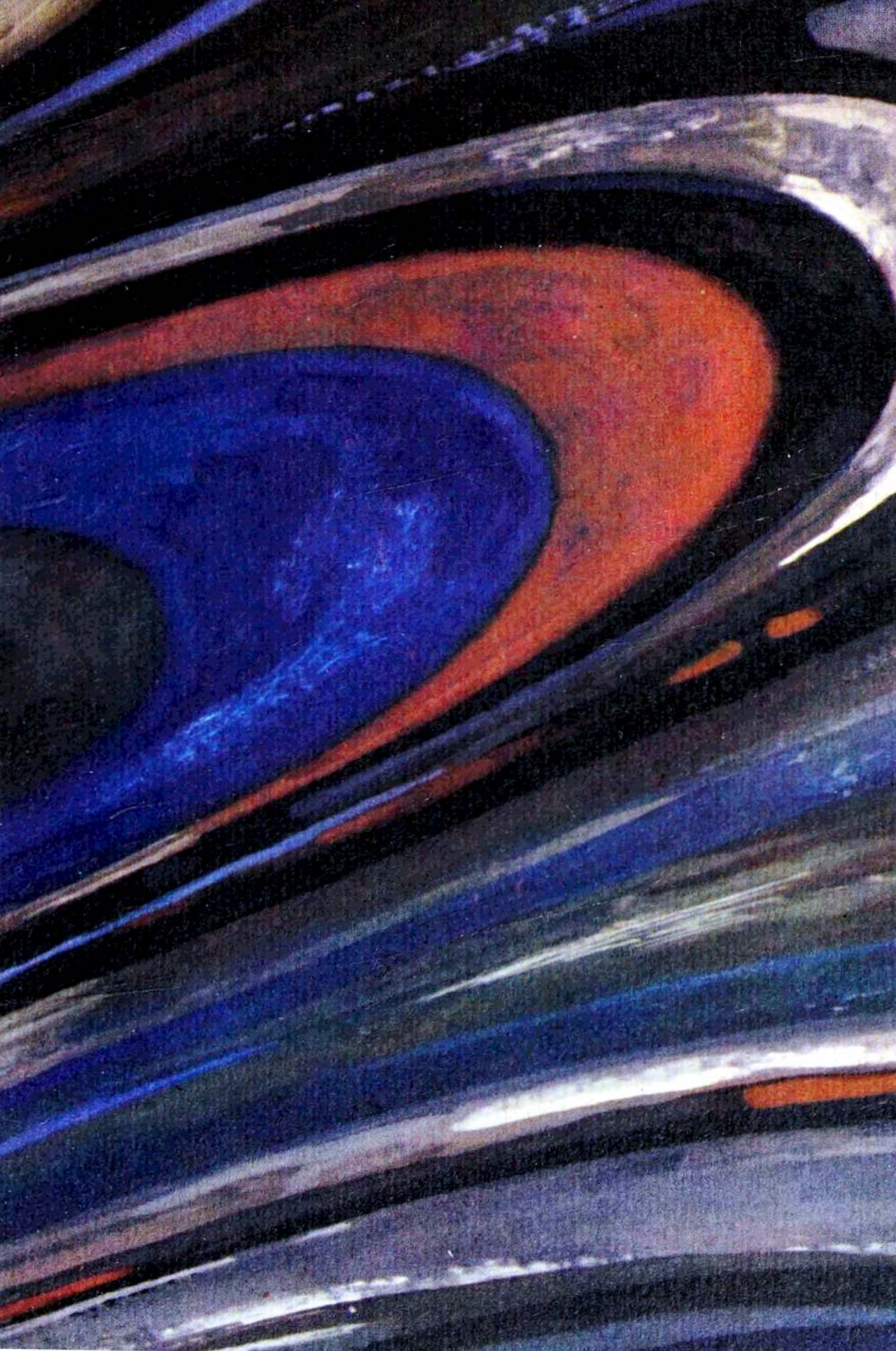
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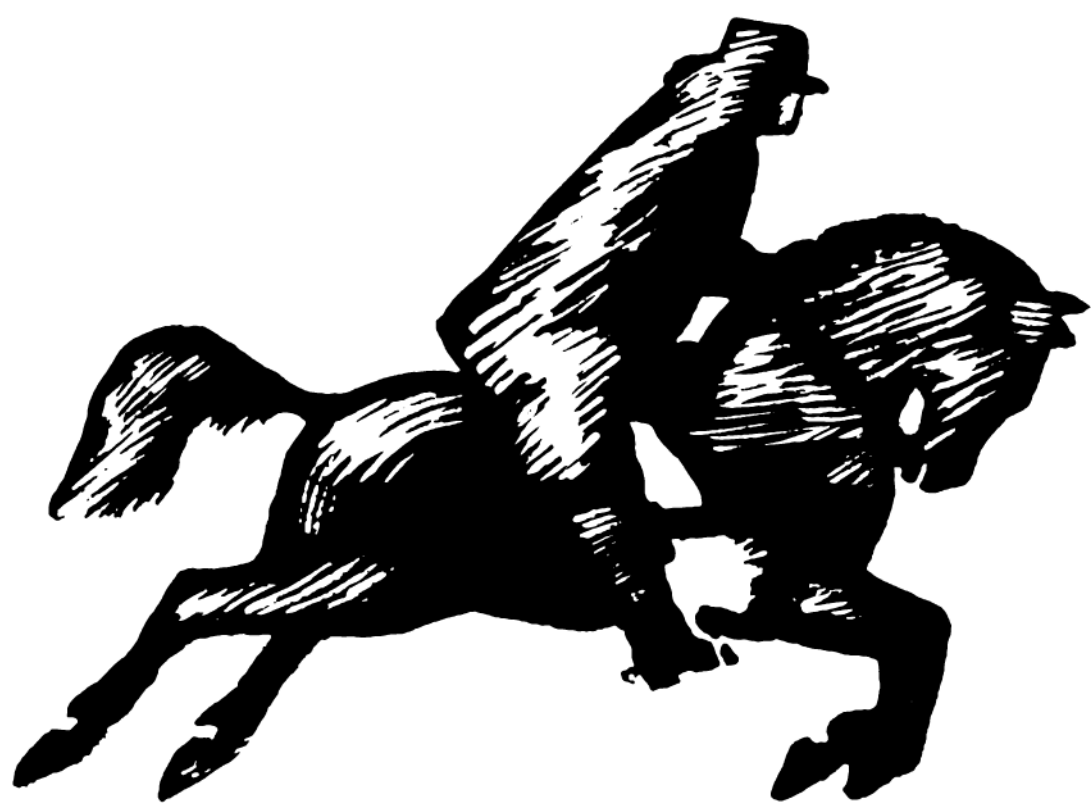




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TALES
AND
FABLES



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Настоящее издание знакомит с лучшими образцами творчества известного американского писателя Амброза Бирса. Новеллистика Бирса отличается тематическим разнообразием. Здесь и произведения, написанные в традиции «страшных рассказов» По, и сатирические зарисовки в духе Марка Твена, и новеллы, посвященные горькому уделу простого человека в Америке конца XIX века. В «Словаре Сатаны» и в «Фантастических баснях» Бирс едко высмеивает официальные добродетели современной ему буржуазной Америки.

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АМБРОЗ БИРС

«О себе автор имеет сообщить следующее: он весьма уравновешен, и ничто не в силах поколебать его спокойствия... Чуждый гнева, он скор на прощение, в своих суждениях мягок и склонен к милосердию; природа наделила его беспредельной верой в высокую добродетель мужчин и совершенную святость женщин; даже в самом мрачном преступлении он неизменно ищет смягчающие обстоятельства; словом, он являет пример благонравия и образец терпимости».

Так он представился читателям своей первой книги, где были собраны его фельетоны. Трудно не почувствовать иронии в автохарактеристике Бирса, сильно напоминающей юбилейный панегирик какому-нибудь безгрешному проповеднику или промышленнику-филантропу из тех, кто почитался столпами общества. Обе эти фигуры принадлежали к числу излюбленных мишеней начинающего сатирика. Книжка не оставляла в этом ни малейшего сомнения. А называлась она «Радости злодея» (*The Fiend's Delight*, 1873).

Бирс издал ее в Лондоне. За плечами у него лежало шесть лет журналистской работы. Она принесла Бирсу шумную славу и массу практиче-

ских неудобств. Местные олигархи ненавидели его — и так неистово, что никогда не допустили бы, чтобы язвительные заметки из «Ньюслеттер» за подписью «Городской плакальщик» (The Town-Cryer) лишний раз привлекли к себе внимание, собранные под одним переплетом.

В Англии, куда Бирс уехал в 1872 г., он не испытывал на себе этой испепеляющей ненависти. Оттого, должно быть, и вспоминал то время как «три самых счастливых и благополучных года» своей жизни. Он начал писать для лондонского журнала «Фан» и для парижской газеты «Фигаро», у него завелись поклонники и литературные покровители, в их числе уже знаменитый Альджернон Суинберн (Algernon Swinburne, 1837-1909). За первой книжкой последовало еще два сборника статей и фельетонов. Заметили их немногие. Но определенную известность Бирсу они все же создали.

Уравновешенность, мягкость, благонравие — все это было явно не о нем. Уж скорее нечто противоположное: горячность, озлобленность, чуть ли не цинизм.

Представления об американской литературе в ту пору были смутными, даже у высокопросвещенных англичан. Большинство считало заокеанскую республику духовной пустыней, всякому свидетельству художественной жизни поражались — как это она не захирела до конца среди грубости и прозаизма тамошних будней. Неза-

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долго до Бирса еще один калифорниец, поэт Жоакин Миллер (Joakin Miller, 1841-1913), возбудил всеобщее любопытство лондонской публики и своей колоритной внешностью, и ковбойскими замашками, и патетичными, громыхающими стихами, заслужившими ему пышную, хотя и эфемерную славу «Байрона с тихоокеанских берегов». Тот же Суинберн с уверенностью писал, что «американский Дальний Запад выдвинет больше национальных поэтов, чем бостонская школа» (то есть Лонгфелло, Дж. Р. Лоуэлл, Уиттьер).

Знакомство с Бирсом, кажется, должно было укрепить эту убежденность. Однако скорее оно поколебало складывающийся стереотип, согласно которому американский, а уж особенно калифорнийский литератор — это непременно «певец необъятной земли и щедрого солнца», энтузиаст, жизнелюб и поборник «простых, естественных нравов». Всех, кто с ним встречался или запомнил его немногословные, убийственно точные комментарии к текущим событиям, Бирс смолodu поражал беспощадной логикой мысли и возведенной в принцип бескомпромиссностью, трезвостью оценок.

Марк Твен (Mark Twain, 1835-1910), начинавший почти одновременно с ним в тех же калифорнийских газетах, через много лет вспоминал, что в «ту далекую пору» слова «оптимист» и «дурак» еще не были синонимами. Для Бирса, похоже, они всегда означали одно и то же. Невозможно

вообразить себе писателя, более далекого от каких бы то ни было иллюзий. Стендалевский эпиграф к «Красному и черному» — «Правда, горькая правда» — был бы уместен на титульном листе любого из двенадцати томов единственного прижизненного собрания сочинений Бирса (1912), тогда пылившегося в книжных лавках Сан-Франциско, а теперь разыскиваемого библиофилами как величайшая редкость.

На фоне настроений тогдашней Америки, окрашенных бездумной верой в прогресс, открывающий перед человечеством великие перспективы, на фоне бурнокипящей деятельности и легкокрылых надежд, которыми жило американское общество после того, как в 1865 г. победой Севера закончилась Гражданская война, странными выглядели и эта мизантропия Бирса, и этот духовный максимализм, побуждавший его называть вещи своими именами и с каким-то отчаянным упрямством сокрушать господствующие поверья и самообманы.

В некрологе один из немногочисленных друзей сравнит его с «Гулливвером, оплетенным тысячью незримых веревочек, в которые свились враждебность публики, ее равнодушие и невежество». Враждебность не притупилась и через много лет после гибели Бирса. Даже Эптон Синклер (Upton Sinclair, 1878-1968), знавший его в последние годы жизни, отзывался о Бирсе не иначе как о «жестоком и нетерпимом старом изверге».

Но равнодушия не было. Фигура слишком видная и для многих слишком опасная, Бирс вызывал к себе пристальное внимание, выражавшееся и во всевозможных кривотолках, в самых фантастических легендах о его прошлом, о его побудительных мотивах, взглядах и принципах. Он не отличался откровенностью даже в разговорах с близкими, и историкам литературы пришлось потратить немало усилий, чтобы за напластованиями осознанной или невольной лжи, опутавшей это имя, открылись подлинные факты, существенные для понимания позиции Бирса и всего его творчества.

Тогда выяснилось, что он прожил удивительную, незаурядную жизнь.

Родом он был из штата Огайо и принадлежал к семье, чьи предки перебрались за океан еще в XVII столетии, вместе с первыми колонистами. Десятый из тринадцати детей полуграмотного фермера, Амброз (родился он 24 июня 1842 г.) воспитывался в духе суровых заповедей пуританства, в этой среде сохранявшего весь свой непрекаемый авторитет. Пуританское воспитание не прошло бесследно, пусть даже много лет спустя в «Словаре Сатаны» (*The Devil's Dictionary*, 1906) Бирс и напишет, что «основной из великих религий мира» является безбожие. Сам он, несомненно, исповедовал эту «основную религию». И все-таки в нем прочно сохранялась пуританская закваска. Быть может, она-то отчасти и предо-

пределила резкость, непримиримость его высказываний о пороках и лицемерии окружающего мира. И уж конечно, здесь истоки того обостренного, едва ли не болезненного ощущения близкого, сиюминутного присутствия смерти, которое так характерно для самосознания пуритан и так явственно проступает во множестве рассказов Бирса.

Исходным узлом его биографии стала Гражданская война.

Он ушел добровольцем в армию северян сразу после того, как в апреле 1861 г. под фортom Самтер прозвучали первые выстрелы, а демобилизовался лишь четыре года спустя, буквально за несколько дней до капитуляции рабовладельческих штатов. Рядовым Девятого индианского полка прошагал он по дорогам Теннесси, Джорджии, Алабамы, участвовал и в трудных оборонительных боях, когда силы южной Конфедерации повсюду теснили плохо обученные бригады северян, и в победоносном рейде генерала Шермана по тылам мятежников, во многом решившем исход войны. Он дрался при Шайло и Стоунз-ривер, при Чикамоге и Нэшвиле, был тяжело ранен в сражении при горе Кенесо, вернулся в строй и закончил войну офицером-топографом в штабе своего первого командира Хейзена, впоследствии вспоминавшего, что Бирс был «храбрым солдатом и безупречным джентльменом».

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Таким — поначалу — он виделся себе и сам, однако фронтовые будни быстро охладили его романтический пыл, заставив позабыть о галантных рыцарях, еще недавно восплаявших воображение подростка, начитавшегося скверных исторических романов. Разысканы письма Бирса из армии: возвышенные банальности исчезают в них уже через несколько месяцев, и на смену им приходит другое — жалобы на нескончаемые лишения, опасности, непролазную грязь барачных, вечную неразбериху и на линии огня, и в тылу, воспоминания о погибших товарищах, неотступные предчувствия собственной гибели, по счастью, не оправдавшиеся. Потом все это отразится в рассказах, как правило, навеянных непосредственно пережитым и запомнившимся на всю жизнь, — в «Пропавшем без вести» (*One of the Missing*), в «Чикамоге» (*Chickamauga*). Когда умолкли пушки, Бирсу еще не исполнилось двадцати трех, но он казался чуть не стариком, этот мучимый астмой и головными болями высокий голубоглазый человек с пышными светлыми усами и редющей шевелюрой, в которой уже пробивалась седина.

Надо было подыскивать себе занятие. Вчерашние герои теперь никого не интересовали — сняв синие и серые мундиры, недавние противники прекрасно ладили друг с другом в новом качестве компаньонов выросших, точно грибы после дождя, фирм, трестов, корпораций, которые

торопились пожать первые плоды ничем более не осложнявшегося капиталистического развития. Бирс на полгода застрял в Алабаме, с отвращением наблюдая пир спекулянтов и проходимцев (их окрестили словечком *carpetbeggars*), явившихся в обозе победителей. Затем судьба надолго прибила его к калифорнийским берегам.

Здесь ничто не напоминало о войне. После «золотой лихорадки» 1849 г. начался строительный и промышленный бум, не прекращаясь ни на месяц, словно Калифорнии вовсе не касались американские политические раздоры и причиненные ими бедствия. Из скромного поселка Сан-Франциско, как по мановению волшебной палочки, вырос большой город, приютивший выходцев едва ли не из всех стран света. Повсюду назойливо заявляло о себе процветание — обилием банков, роскошью магазинов, великолепными доками, разбросанными вдоль красивой бухты Золотых ворот.

Бирс стал служащим монетного двора, однако очень скоро его полностью поглотила журналистика. Впечатления военной поры выплеснулись в стихах, которые он сам признал высокопарными и неудачными, раз и навсегда отказавшись от поэтических лавров. Война осталась в памяти нестершейся, чтобы двадцатилетие спустя ожить на страницах его рассказов так, как будто время ничего не изменило, не сгладило ни ужаса, ни

боли, которую Бирсу выпало пережить в те незабываемые четыре года.

А пока его постоянными спутниками стали репортерский блокнот и редакторский карандаш.

Он писал в «Калифорниен» и «Ньюслеттер», а вернувшись из Англии, вел постоянную колонку в «Аргонавте» и в «Осе». Газеты закрывались: прогорали или не выдерживали натиска денежных тузов, покупавших контрольный пакет акций, если их не устраивала избранная издателем линия или просто папахивающая разоблачениями статья. Прославившийся своей неподкупностью Бирс не раз оставался без работы. Но его умели ценить, даже ненавидя. Затевался новый еженедельник, и опять мелькала хорошо знакомая читателям подпись: «Городской плакальщик», «Болтун» (The Prattler), A. G. B. Инициалы расшифровывались неожиданно: Almighty God Bierce.

На самом деле он, конечно, не был так уж всемогущ, даже после того, как его заметил и впрямь всемогущий газетный магнат Херст, сделав основным сотрудником своего «Сан-Франциско экземинар». Но Бирса побаивались не напрасну. Он обладал острым глазом, отточенным пером, бесстрашием и чувством справедливости. И когда это его чувство было оскорблено, он кидался в бой, не размышляя, с каким сильным противником придется столкнуться.

Строительные тресты нуждались в рабочих —

китайцы были прилежнее всех и меньше всех для себя требовали. Их скопилось в Калифорнии десятки тысяч, когда корпорация обанкротилась, а вчерашние сычуанские крестьяне оказались на улицах Сан-Франциско без крова и хлеба. Никому и в голову не пришло отправить их на Восток страны, где рабочих рук не хватало, а уж тем более через океан, в Китай. Их избивали полицейские, травили обыватели, а некий Кирни с ведома и согласия отцов города основал так называемый Союз калифорнийских рабочих — махрово расистскую организацию, прославившуюся погромами и расправами. В дело вмешался Бирс и со страниц «Аргонавта» обличал Кирни с такой прямоотой и резкостью, что тому пришлось таки распустить своих бандитов и убраться в Техас — дело пошло к аресту.

Крупнейший подрядчик Хантингтон присвоил десятки миллионов, отпущенных на финансирование Центральной и Южнотихоокеанской железной дороги. Об этом знали все, и все молчали, пока Бирс не начал собирать фальшивые расписки и документы, переданные потом в Верховный суд. Начался процесс — один из самых скандальных процессов 90-х годов. Бирс выступал главным свидетелем обвинения. От имени Хантингтона ему предложили взятку, и он потребовал ровно столько, сколько обвиняемому в итоге пришлось вернуть казне. Из зала суда шли репортажи, которые Херст скрепя сердце печатал: ему

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надо было нанести удар по своему главному газетному конкуренту — подкупленному подрядчиком Пулицеру. Но отношения издателя и его лучшего журналиста становились все более натянутыми. Бирс не желал знать ни удержу, ни меры.

Окончательно это выяснилось во время испано-американской войны 1898 г. Еще задолго до ее начала херстовская пресса развернула яростную антииспанскую кампанию, пустив в дело весь набор обычных для таких случаев домыслов, небылиц и шовинистской демагогии. Голос Бирса прозвучал резким диссонансом: «Охоту до чужих земель, если она пробудилась, уже не унять — она бушует в крови, словно разъярившийся лев в клетке... От такой вот лихорадки трясет теперь нашу страну». Война оказалась молниеносной. Правоту Бирса подтвердит последующая история. Газеты надрывались от восторга по поводу успехов американского оружия. А Бирсу пришлось уйти. И даже уехать из Сан-Франциско — в Вашингтон, на покой.

К этому времени он стал уже достаточно известным прозаиком и мог бы посвятить себя литературной работе. Не получалось. Бирса преследовали несчастья. Старший сын, шестнадцатилетний школьник, вызвал на дуэль своего ровесника, более удачливого в любовных делах, и оба погибли от полученных ран. А вскоре совсем юным умер и второй сын. У него были слабые

легкие — отцовское наследство, еще одно напоминание о Гражданской войне.

Бирс переносил эти страшные удары стоически, однако писать почти не мог. Год от года его все сильнее притягивали давно отшумевшие битвы. И он объезжал места, памятные с армейской юности, как будто ожидая, что над этими пустующими, поросшими клевером полями вот-вот вновь взвоятся боевые стяги и с истошным визгом полетит картечь.

Себя он по-прежнему ощущал военным и признавался друзьям: «Ни за что на свете не хотел бы умереть в своей постели. С помощью божией и не придется».

Это написано весной 1913 г. Желание Бирса вскоре исполнилось — одна из очень немногих его сбывшихся надежд. В Мексике полыхала революция. Бирса тянуло туда неудержимо. Он пытался обзавестись журналистским удостоверением. Не удалось, и тогда он решил отправиться на свой страх и риск, присоединившись к отряду Панчо Вильи и посылая корреспонденции прямо с места событий. Кто станет их печатать, его не заботило.

Некоторые биографы полагают, что, приняв такое решение, он искал смерти. Последнее его письмо — из Чихуахуа — помечено 26 декабря. А 11 января 1914 г. начался штурм Охинаги. Один из офицеров Вильи утверждал, что в тот день видел Бирса на рассвете, другой припомнил

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какого-то «старого гринго», расстрелянного у стен крепости. С. Эйзенштейн, почитатель Бирса, пытавшийся разыскать в Мексике его следы, категорически отрицал, что расстрел мог быть санкционирован Вильей. Скорее всего Бирс пал жертвой ненависти к американцам, в годы революции особенно сильной. Вряд ли когда-нибудь удастся установить истину или найти могилу Бирса: свирепствовал тиф, и после взятия Охинаги все тела погибших были немедленно сожжены.

Незадолго до своего исчезновения Бирс выпустил маленькую книжку «Как писать» (*Write It Right*, 1909, собранную из статей разных лет. Конечно, у него не было собственной стройной литературной теории. Тем не менее были принципы, которые он в этой книжке изложил хоть и сжато, но ясно. Знать их важно, чтобы лучше ориентироваться в бирсовском необычном мире.

«Что такое настоящая литература? — спрашивал он и отвечал: — Это четкая мысль, изложенная так, что она становится самоочевидной». Никаких недоговорок, никакой расплывчатости, никакого многословия. Чем короче и точнее фраза, абзац и весь рассказ, тем сильнее окажется произведенный им эффект.

Самое действенное оружие в руках писателя — это остроумие, парадоксальность. Не юмор, «слишком терпимый, нежный, ласкающий вместо

того, чтобы жалить», а именно остроумие: оно «бьет без промаха, приносит свои извинения и затем принимается поворачивать нож в ране». И еще парадоксальность хороша тем, что освобождает от «абсолютной правдивости с ее абсолютной скукой». Парадокс всегда «глубок и мудр».

Примеры для подражания? Рабле. Ларошфуко. Преклонение перед автором знаменитых «Мемуаров» и «Максим» Бирс пронес через всю жизнь, перечитывая его, когда писался и «Фантастические басни» (*Fantastic Fables*, 1899) и «Словарь Сатаны».

Об американских предшественниках Бирс почти не упоминал, словно бы их у него не было. А о современниках высказывался едко и раздраженно.

Еще в раннюю калифорнийскую пору его оценил Брет Гарт (Francis Bret-Harte, 1836-1902) и напечатал первые эссе Бирса у себя в «Оверленд мансли». Но дебютант оказался строптивым: резко высмеял романтические красоты, ходульную мелодраматичность, слезливую дидактику, портившую рассказы и самого редактора, и его молодых протеже, и ушел из журнала, хлопнув дверью.

Десятилетием позже он обрушился на тогдашнего властителя литературных дум Уильяма Дина Хоуэллса (William Dean Howells, 1837-1920). Хоуэллс пропагандировал реализм и сделал очень много для того, чтобы новое писательское

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поколение воспитывалось на Тургеневе, Толстом, Флобере, перенимая их уроки глубоко жизненного, правдивого искусства. Но в своих собственных романах он раз за разом сбивался на сентиментальность, притупляя острые углы действительности, и уверенно вел сюжет к набившим оскомину счастливым финалам, таящим в себе прописные назидания. Этого Бирс простить ему не мог и окрестил почтенного редактора «Атлантик мансли» — лучшего в те годы журнала — «мисс Нэнси Хоуэллс».

Впрочем, и Генри Джеймс (Henry James, 1843-1916), писатель покрупнее Хоуэллса и решительно изгонявший всякую патетику, для него был «мисс Нэнси Джеймс», и только. Бирса не интересовали переживания людей, редко и неохотно покидающих бостонские или европейские гостиные. Углубленный психологизм ему претил, а многомерность характеров казалась ненужной роскошью.

Разумеется, в таких своих суждениях он бывал крайне несправедлив и тенденциозен. Существеннее, однако, уловить объективные причины, вызвавшие расхождение Бирса с ведущими прозаиками его времени. Вероятно, перед нами не столь уж редкий случай, когда писательскую судьбу формирует происходящий перелом литературных эпох, отзываясь в этой судьбе внутренним драматизмом, мучительным противостоянием разнонаправленных начал. Бирс принес в

литературу безошибочное, из первых рук знание материала, честность и трезвость его осмысления, пристрастие к достоверности, любовь к конкретике, презрение к «возвышающему обману». И все же он не покривил душой, уравнив «правдивость» со «скукой», — так он и впрямь чувствовал, и оттого откладывал в сторону романы Джеймса и остался равнодушен к книгам Твена, новаторски изображавшим «жизнь на Миссисипи», предвосхищая в американской литературе XX век.

По складу художественного мышления Бирс был реалистом. По характеру волновавших его коллизий, по преобладающим чертам поэтики он был романтиком.

Он, в сущности, уже оттолкнулся от того берега, где нашли приют запоздалые приверженцы романтической школы, но противоположный берег, энергично осваиваемый приверженцами новой школы реализма, казался ему неприветливым: однообразным и каким-то голым.

Для американской литературной жизни после Гражданской войны подобная ситуация не была исключительной, она лишь выступила в судьбе Бирса особенно отчетливо. В отличие от Европы, где события 1830 г. фактически подвели черту под историей романтического движения, в Америке оно набрало полную силу лишь двадцатилетием позже. Строго говоря, романтизм здесь охватил собой все XIX столетие, долго о себе напоминая и в веке XX. Послевоенная эпоха, этот,

по саркастическому определению Твена, «позолоченный век» (The Gilded Age), породил в литературе глубокие перемены. Заявили о себе писатели, реалистически передававшие «местный колорит» давно обжитых уголков и еще почти диких просторов Америки — Брет Гарт был самым талантливым среди этих «регионалистов», но можно вспомнить и поздние романы Бичер-Стоу (Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1811-1896), и книги Сары Орн Джуит (Sarah Orne Jewett, 1849-1909), Эдварда Эгглстона (Edward Eggleston, 1837-1902), многих других. С Хоуэллсом, Джеймсом, Твеном в 70-е годы реализм стал магистральной дорогой американской прозы. А когда в 1892 г. Бирс издал свои сборники новелл, на литературную сцену уже выдвигались натуралисты, и Хемлин Гарленд (Hamlin Garland, 1860-1940) опубликовал манифест нового направления.

Но романтизм продолжал жить. Даже вырождаясь в чистое эпигонство, он оставался силой настолько ощутимой и значительной, что еще в 1895 г. Твену пришлось взяться за перо, чтобы изобличить «литературные грехи» Купера (James Fenimore Cooper, 1789-1851), у которого находилось слишком много последователей, перенимавших самые устарелые, обветшалые приемы этого писателя.

Удивляло, однако, другое: романтизм не просто доцветал — он развивался, хотя это выяснилось только с дистанции времени. Никто не вспо-

минал о Мелвилле (Herman Melville, 1819-1891), а он перед самой своей смертью создал один из шедевров американской романтической прозы — повесть «Билли Бадд» (*Billy Budd*). Никто не заметил восемь коротких анонимных стихотворений, появившихся в скромном бостонском журнале, а их автором была Эмили Дикинсон (Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886), чья лирика вошла в сокровищницу романтической поэзии.

Самые известные рассказы Бирса написаны за три года, оказавшихся для него в творческом отношении наиболее плодотворными: с 1888 по 1891. И место этих произведений — рядом с «Билли Бадом» и стихами Дикинсон, написанными примерно в то же время.

Все это последние — и подлинные — свершения американского романтизма.

Хотя Бирс считал себя наследником великих французов XVI и XVII веков, у него был предшественник гораздо более прямой и близкий как во времени, так и в пространстве: Эдгар По (Edgar Allan Poe, 1809-1849), создатель того жанра «страшного» рассказа, который окажется и основным новеллистическим жанром самого Бирса. Подчас невооруженным глазом видно сходство избираемых обоими писателями фабульных ситуаций. Они основаны на тайне, которую рассказчик, а с ним и читатель распутывают, опираясь на логику и наблюдательность. Повествующий очерчен очень скупой и, собственно,

остается персонажем незаинтересованным, бесстрастным — вроде секретаря в суде. Читателю не следует подсказывать, пусть работает его собственная мысль. Изложение событий должно быть строго объективным. Тогда все невероятное, фантастическое, пугающее, что заключено в повествовании, утратит слишком уж резкий привкус утрировки. Перестанет восприниматься только как фантом, порожденный разгулявшимся воображением автора.

Вслед за По, которого он называл «величайшим из известных нам американцев», Бирс пошел по пути ограничения литературных условностей жесткой логичностью, рациональностью анализа коллизий и достоверностью конкретных деталей, наблюдений, штрихов. В этом трудном искусстве он достиг многого. Тем не менее две враждующие стихии до конца не примирились. Масштабность увенчивающего рассказ образа-символа, которого требовала романтическая поэтика, была не в ладу с репортерской точностью описания, с математически рассчитанной последовательностью внутреннего движения, отличающими едва ли не любую новеллу Бирса.

«Всадник в небе» (*A Horseman in the Sky*) поражает почти толстовской глубиной и пластикой, с какой донесена атмосфера фронтовой повседневности и переданы переживания юноши, одиноким часовым охраняющего лощину, где тысячи его товарищей спят тяжелым сном бесконечно устав-

ших, вымотавшихся людей. Но заурядный для такой ситуации эпизод — появление лазутчика конфедератов, выстрел, падающая со скалы конная фигура — для Бирса непременно должен обладать обобщенным значением. Оттого убитый, конечно, не мог не оказаться отцом убийцы. А сама его смерть не могла не приобрести оттенка нереальности, картинности. Зато с предельной, рискованной прямоотой выражена важнейшая для Бирса мысль, что в этой войне брат восстает против брата и сыновья идут против отцов, а столкновение Севера и Юга безмерной, непереносимой болью отзывается в каждом человеческом сердце.

«Чикамога» могла бы показаться дневниковой записью участника сражения, сделанной сразу после боя и сохранившей все его ужасающие подробности: озверение людей, красные сполохи взрывов, кровавые дорожки, оставляемые ранеными, ползущими к ручью по-волчьи, будто в зловещей пантомиме. Бирс был при Чикамоге, но рассказ написан лишь четверть века спустя, и остается подивиться остроте его памяти. Это рассказ о том, до чего жестока война. Как всегда у Бирса, она запечатлена с непарадной стороны, и чтобы усилить ощущение жестокости, все происходящее показано глазами ребенка, для которого веселая игра оборачивается чудовищным потрясением. Но и этого Бирсу недостаточно. Он будет нагнетать впечатление кошмара вплоть до заклю-

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чительного абзаца, в котором над телом убитой матери (разорванное платье, сгустки крови в волосах, пенная масса вываливающегося мозга — беспощадная, на грани натурализма бирсовская конкретика детали) раздаётся животный вой мальчика, оказавшегося глухонемым, хотя раньше в рассказе нет ни намека на это обстоятельство. И снова возникает обобщенный, превосходящий все границы реального символ страдания и боли — сильный, быть может, даже избыточно сильный финальный аккорд, напоминающий эффектные концовки рассказов По.

Есть между этими писателями родственность и более глубокая, открывающаяся только при внимательном чтении.

Оба они лишь однажды испытали свои силы в большой повествовательной форме. И для обоих этот эксперимент оказался не вполне удачным. «Повесть об Артуре Гордоне Пиме» (*The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, 1838) при всей изобретательности сюжета и напряженности кульминаций уступает лучшим рассказам По, а местами даже становится монотонной: для такого содержания жанровые рамки повести слишком просторны. «Монах и дочка палача» (*The Monk and the Hangman's Daughter*, 1891), бирсовская обработка одноименной повести его немецкого современника Рихарда Фосса, страдает той же растянутостью, даже рыхлостью построения, не

говоря уже о декадентской идее всевластия эроса, положенной в ее основу.

Поучительные ошибки! Дело не просто в том, что По и Бирс были прирожденными новеллистами, дело в особенностях их мироощущения, их художественного видения. Пространство романа, заполняемое не одними лишь внешними событиями, но главным образом духовным развитием персонажей или их постепенным самопознанием в испытаниях жизни, ни для По, ни для Бирса не было той свободной далью, которая распахивается перед художником, желающим передать многоликость, пестроту, динамику действительности. Наоборот, здесь они чувствовали себя стесненно, как непривычный к горам человек, которому пришлось дышать разреженным воздухом. Их, а в особенности Бирса, герой интересовал в минуту предельного напряжения всех своих сил, в переломный миг своей биографии, когда нравственная сущность обнажается резко и наглядно.

Под рутиной будничности, шла ли речь о сравнительно спокойной американской повседневности времен По или об ажиотаже «позолоченного века», который выпало наблюдать Бирсу, для обоих клокотала истинная жизнь, полная муки и боли, напоминающая о себе неожиданными поворотами судьбы, непредсказуемыми трагедиями, непостижимыми катастрофами. В новелле, позволяющей изолировать и укрупнить подобные «мгновенья роковые», ход этой подспудной, но

доподлинной жизни просматривался с особенной отчетливостью. Как будто писателю удавалось прикоснуться к потаенному нерву бытия.

Оттого и возникает ощущение реальности невозможного, вещественности ирреального — то самое ощущение, которое старался вызвать в своем читателе Бирс. В одном из самых известных его рассказов «Случай на мосту через Совинный ручей» (*An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*) казнят диверсанта-южанина. Неминуемая развязка дана на первой же странице. Но человек вступает в заведомо безнадежную схватку со своим неотвратимым уделом. И в нем открывается безмерная сила сопротивления убийственным обстоятельствам, такая изобретательность и такое мужество, что неосуществимое бегство из петли нельзя не воспринять как осуществившийся факт. Последней фразой Бирс развеет эту иллюзию. Однако он писал свою новеллу не для того, чтобы засвидетельствовать профессиональное умение руководившего казнью сержанта. Существенно само это слияние истинного и пригрезившегося — до полной неразличимости.

За полстолетия до Бирса к той же цели стремился По. Но у него была другая задача. Он хотел воплотить мучительные противоречия романтического сознания, преследуемого образами жестокости, которые в конечном счете оказываются свидетельством непоправимого разлада мечты и яви. А Бирс передавал опыт солдата,

потрясенного кровавыми испытаниями братоубийственной войны. И в его рассказах аллегория наполнялась многочисленными отзвуками этого опыта — слишком непосредственными, слишком реальными, чтобы коллизия, даже на вид отвлеченная и условная, не приобрела живой психологической убедительности. Достоевский определил метод По как «фантастический реализм». О Бирсе это можно сказать с еще большим основанием. Сам он считал, что дело художника создавать «страну-фантазию». Но получалась у него узнаваемая, не придуманная страна.

Фактически он был ее первооткрывателем. С Бирса ведет свою историю американская проза о войне — о настоящей войне, той, где льется кровь, а не той, где современные рыцари без страха и упрека с завидной легкостью совершают подвиг за подвигом, вдохновляясь высокими словами да воспоминаниями об ангелоподобной невесте. Есть у него рассказ «Убит под Ресакой» (*Killed at Resaka*), где такого рода стереотипы, которыми изобиловала скороспелая беллетристика о Гражданской войне, развенчаны со всей присущей Бирсу ненавидящей иронией. И какую бы из его военных новелл ни открыть, в ней обязательно даст себя почувствовать жажда подлинности. Ее оценят многие восприимчивые уроки Бирса — от Стивена Крейна (Stephen Crane, 1871-1900) до Хемингуэя (Ernest Hemingway, 1899-

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1961) и писателей, пришедших в литературу сразу после 1945 г.

Свой первый сборник новелл он хотел назвать просто: «Рассказы о военных и штатских». В конце концов название стало подзаголовком. Английский издатель придумал другое заглавие — «Средь жизни» (*In the Midst of Life*, 1892). Ему вспомнилась строка из англиканской заупокойной молитвы: «Средь жизни мы в лапах у смерти». Идею Бирса этот стих передает афористично и точно. Смерть была истинной главной героиней рассказов, собранных в его книге.

Удивлять это не должно, и не оттого лишь, что книга была по преимуществу о войне. Через несколько лет автор заметит в одном своем письме: «Когда я спрашиваю себя, что случилось с юным Амброзом Бирсом, который сражался при Чикамоге, мне приходится ответить, что он умер. Что-то от него еще живет в моей памяти, но все равно он совершенно мертв. Его просто нет». Бирс рассказывал о войне, каждый день уносящей сотни жизней, и кроме того, он рассказывал о том душевном омертвлении, которое стало судьбой прошедших войну солдат.

Сама тональность его новелл звучала диссонансом на фоне настроений, которые преобладали и в тогдашней Америке, и в ее литературе, пока еще далеко не растративших веры в прекрасный завтрашний день. Пройдет всего десятилетие, и мрачные, сардонические интонации

Бирса с удвоенной силой откликнутся в памфлетах самого, казалось бы, жизнелюбивого из американских писателей той поры Марка Твена, в его рукописях, настолько густо пересыпанных свидетельствами крушения былых надежд, что сам автор, страшая упрека в оскорблении американских святынь, прятал мелко исписанные листочки даже от друзей и родных. Бирс словно предвидел этот переворот в мироощущении, на рубеже столетий сделавшийся, если и не массовым, то характерным и несомненным. Американский литературовед Ван Вик Брукс (Van Wick Brooks, 1886-1963) полагал, что «Бирс остановился в своем развитии где-то около 1850 г.»¹ — не превзойдя По, который умер в 1849 году. Но не вернее ли предположить, что, наоборот, в чем-то он обогнал свое время?

Ошибку Брукса нетрудно понять. По первому впечатлению бирсовский мир кажется скованным, неподвижным, чуть не оцепенелым. И слишком заметны следы, оставленные в этом мире автором «Ворона» и рассказов о сыщике Дюпене. Только нельзя довольствоваться первым впечатлением. Будни войны и психология человека на войне были творческим открытием Бирса, здесь бессмысленно искать американских предтеч. А поэтому и вся его система художест-

¹ Ван Вик Брукс. Писатель и американская жизнь, т. 2, М., 1971, с. 67.

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венных координат, вызывающая столько ассоциаций с новеллами «безумного Эдгара», на деле остается явлением вполне самостоятельным, незаменимым.

Смерть доминирует в его рассказах, не придавая им монотонности, потому что всякий раз под его пером смерть завершает определенный этический конфликт, а такие конфликты многообразны, как сама действительность.

Он писал о людях, ищущих смерти из страха перед жестокостями войны, а в новелле «Один офицер, один солдат» (*One Officer, One Man*) рассказал о человеке, покончившем с собой во время боя, — случай, показавшийся читателям невероятным, хотя по логике развернутой Бирсом моральной коллизии такой исход единственно возможен.

Он писал о тех, кто пытался заслониться от грозной реальности гаерством и позерством, оказываясь беспомощным, когда эта реальность предъявляла свои неоспоримые права, и о тех, кто принимал жизнь во всей ее горькой истинности, а оттого умел достойно встретить и свой последний час (*Parker Adderson, Philosopher*).

У Ларошфуко он нашел мысль, в высшей степени созвучную собственному восприятию нравственной природы человека: «Бесстрашие — это необычайная сила души, возносящая ее над замешательством, тревогой и смятением, порождаемыми встречами с серьезной опасностью». В каж-

дом своем герое Бирс искал приметы такой силы, такой способности «сохранять ясность ума в самых неожиданных и ужасных обстоятельствах». Когда находил, появлялись персонажи, подобные Клаверингу из новеллы о жалком «философе» Аддерсоне, без колебаний предпочитающие смерть бесчестью, как отец и сын из «Всадника в небе».

Но далеко не всем дана была духовная энергия, которую Бирс считал порукой «спокойствия» перед лицом смерти — бесспорным доказательством обретенной человеком этической целостности и правды. У него не редкость характеры слабые, лишенные нравственного стержня. Обычно он заставлял этих персонажей столкнуться с мнимой угрозой, принимаемой ими за подлинный смертельный риск, и, как бы переворачивая привычную его читателям «предельную» ситуацию, выявлял ту духовную робость, которая для Бирса была синонимом этического ничтожества личности. На подобном эффекте построены многие его рассказы, например, «Пропавший без вести».

Внешне неправдоподобное оказывалось в них глубоко убедительным. Бирс делом доказывал принцип, позднее сформулированный в книжке «Как писать»: призвание художника — «показывать жизнь не такой, как она есть, а такой, какой она могла бы быть».

В «Пропавшем без вести» герой умирает от разрыва сердца. Придавленный к земле облом-

ками рухнувшего здания и вынужденный смотреть прямо в черное отверстие собственного ружья, наставленного в упор, он не знает, что винтовка разрядилась, когда он падал на землю. Он становится жертвой своего же тайного бездонного ужаса. Он капитулирует перед призрачной опасностью. Это кажется невероятным. Но это «может быть».

В «Словарь Сатаны» Бирс внесет такое определение: «*Призрак*. Внешний и видимый знак внутреннего страха». Формула, четко характеризующая поэтику целого ряда его рассказов, в которых перемешано реальное и фантастическое.

Он собрал такие рассказы в своей следующей книге, назвав ее «Может ли это быть?» (*Can Such Things Be?*, 1893). Заглавие является реминисценцией из монолога Макбета: «Разве такое может, словно туча летом, пройти бесследно?»¹. Теперь Бирс писал, главным образом, не о войне, а о мирно текущей повседневности, которая в его новеллах щедро расцвечена происшествиями таинственными, многозначительными и пугающими. Впоследствии, составляя тома собрания сочинений, он перенес целый ряд рассказов из первой книги во вторую, подчеркнув единство их проблематики, их художественной сущности. Изменился фон, на котором разворачиваются события. Сами же события фактически остались неизменными.

¹ Акт III, сцена IV. Перевод Ю. Корнеева.

Как и прежде, герои сталкиваются лицом к лицу с непонятными им грозными силами, как и прежде, все решается способностью или неспособностью человека мужественно противостоять опасностям, угрожающим самому его существованию. Пожалуй, лишь налет таинственности заметно усилился, загустел. Рецензенты поговаривали об иррационализме и мистике. Точнее было бы сказать о вызове, который Бирс бросал своему слишком рациональному веку, предлагая объяснить тайны природы, не поддающиеся привычному анализу: от ясно установленных причин к логично выведенным следствиям.

Некоторые его догадки поразительны по смелости. В «Хозяине Моксона» (*Moxon's Master*) он воплотил смехотворную, по тогдашним понятиям, идею разумности материи — понадобятся десятки лет, чтобы задуматься над этим предположением всерьез. Восстание машины против своего творца станет актуальным сюжетом уже в наши дни, заполнив страницы научно-фантастических романов. Бирс написал об этом в новелле, датированной 1890 г.

Время все поставило на свои места, выявив в бирсовских рассказах о «невероятном» то, что свидетельствовало лишь о колебавшейся вере в беспредельное могущество рациональных концепций, и то, что предвосхитило свершения разума, которыми ознаменован XX век. Бирс был человеком своей эпохи, но эпоха понимала его

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все меньше, торопясь с выводами об «эксцентричности» и «цинизме».

Сборник «Может ли это быть?» остался едва замеченным. Та же судьба шестью годами позже ожидала «Фантастические басни». А ведь это была удивительная книга. В ней возрождался полузабытый античный жанр и господствовал лаконизм в духе Ларошфуко. И в ней он высказал немало горьких, злых, но справедливых мыслей о жизни, которая его окружала, — о всевластии лицемерия и своекорыстия, о ханжестве, тупоумии, продажности, о ничтожестве людских стремлений, о противоестественности социальных норм, возведенных в идеал.

Разбирая в одной из своих работ по теории монтажа басню «Безутешная вдова», Эйзенштейн показал сущность метода Бирса-сатирика. Рыдающая над могилой женщина навевает мысль о горе по потерянному мужу, но в могиле лежит ее любовник. По словам Эйзенштейна, Бирс опрокидывает «раз установленный трафарет вывода»¹. Это важно для поэтики кинематографа. Это важно и для понимания не только приемов Бирса, но и всей его творческой да и мировоззренческой установки. Он обладал выдающейся способностью развенчивать трафаретное мышление своих соотечественников. За это они и пла-

¹ С. Эйзенштейн. Собр. соч., в 6-ти тт., т. 2, М., 1962, с. 157.

тили ему неприязнью, все усиливавшейся с каждой его книгой.

«Словарь Сатаны» он писал много лет, включая в рукопись пародии на ходовые, трафаретные образцы журналистики, беллетристики и поэзии своего времени. Рукопись долгое время носила название «Лексикон циника». А когда в 1906 г. она была издана, словечко «цинник» прилипло к Бирсу накрепко. Не нашлось иных слов, чтобы охарактеризовать раскрывшееся в выношенных, отточенных афоризмах этой книги умонастроение человека, слишком хорошо изучившего свою эпоху и свою страну и не обольщавшегося никакими высокопарными декларациями, никакими успокоительными иллюзиями.

Такое умонастроение было немодным. Определение моды есть в «Словаре Сатаны»: это «деспот, которого умные люди высмеивают и которому они подчиняются». Сам Бирс отказался ему подчиниться. И велением «деспота» был как бы вычеркнут из литературы — при жизни да и на десятилетие после своего загадочного конца.

Но могущество «деспота» оказалось не безграничным. Поколение 20-х годов, пережившее шок первой мировой войны, открыло Бирса заново. С той поры мода над ним не властна. Он занимает свое достойное место в истории литературы, оставаясь одним из самых своеобразных американских писателей рубежа веков.

А. Зверев

Tales







A HORSEMAN IN THE SKY

I

One sunny afternoon in the autumn of the year 1861 a soldier lay in a clump of laurel by the side of a road in western Virginia.* He lay at full length upon his stomach, his feet resting upon the toes, his head upon the left

forearm. His extended right hand loosely grasped his rifle. But for the somewhat methodical disposition of his limbs and a slight rhythmic movement of the cartridge box at the back of his belt he might have been thought to be dead. He was asleep at his post of duty. But if detected he would be dead shortly afterward, death being the just and legal penalty of his crime.

The clump of laurel in which the criminal lay was in the angle of a road which after ascending southward a steep acclivity to that point turned sharply to the west, running along the summit for perhaps one hundred yards. There it turned southward again and went zigzagging downward through the forest. At the salient of that second angle was a large flat rock, jutting out northward, overlooking the deep valley from which the road ascended. The rock capped a high cliff; a stone dropped from its outer edge would have fallen sheer downward one thousand feet to the tops of the pines. The angle where the soldier lay was on another spur of the same cliff. Had he been awake he would have commanded a view, not only of the short arm of the road and the jutting rock, but of the entire profile of the cliff below it. It might well have made him giddy to look.

The country was wooded everywhere except at the bottom of the valley to the northward, where there was a small natural meadow, through which flowed a stream scarcely visible from the valley's rim. This open ground looked hardly larger than an ordinary

dooryard, but was really several acres in extent. Its green was more vivid than that of the enclosing forest. Away beyond it rose a line of giant cliffs similar to those upon which we are supposed to stand in our survey of the savage scene, and through which the road had somehow made its climb to the summit. The configuration of the valley, indeed, was such that from this point of observation it seemed entirely shut in, and one could but have wondered how the road which found a way out of it had found a way into it, and whence came and whither went the waters of the stream that parted the meadow more than a thousand feet below.

No country is so wild and difficult but men will make it a theater of war; concealed in the forest at the bottom of that military rat-trap, in which half a hundred men in possession of the exists might have starved an army to submission, lay five regiments of Federal infantry.* They had marched all the previous day and night, and were resting. At nightfall they would take to the road again, climb to the place where their unfaithful sentinel now slept, and descending the other slope of the ridge fall upon a camp of the enemy at about midnight. Their hope was to surprise it, for the road led to the rear of it. In case of failure, their position would be perilous in the extreme; and fail they surely would should accident or vigilance apprise the enemy of the movement.

II

The sleeping sentinel in the clump of laurel was a young Virginian named Carter Druse. He was the son of wealthy parents, an only child, and had known such ease and cultivation and high living* as wealth and taste were able to command in the mountain country of western Virginia. His home was but a few miles from where he now lay. One morning he had risen from the breakfast table and said, quietly but gravely, "Father, a Union regiment* has arrived at Grafton. I am going to join it."

The father lifted his leonine head, looked at the son a moment in silence, and replied, "Well, go, sir, and whatever may occur do what you conceive to be your duty. Virginia, to which you are a traitor, must get on without you. Should we both live to the end of the war, we will speak further of the matter. Your mother, as the physician has informed you, is in a most critical condition; at the best she cannot be with us longer than a few weeks, but that time is precious. It would be better not to disturb her."

So Carter Druse, bowing reverently to his father, who returned the salute with a stately courtesy that masked a breaking heart, left the home of his childhood to go soldiering. By conscience and courage, by deeds of devotion and daring, he soon commended himself to his fellows and his officers; and it was to these qualities and to some knowledge of the country that he owed his selection for his present perilous

A Horseman in the Sky

duty at the extreme outpost. Nevertheless, fatigue had been stronger than resolution, and he had fallen asleep. What good or bad angel came in a dream to rouse him from his state of crime, who shall say? Without a movement, without a sound, in the profound silence and the languor of the late afternoon, some invisible messenger of fate touched with unsealing finger the eyes of his consciousness—whispered into the ear of his spirit the mysterious awakening word which no human lips ever have spoken, no human memory ever has recalled. He quietly raised his forehead from his arm and looked between the masking stems of the laurels, instinctively closing his right hand about the stock of his rifle.

His first feeling was a keen artistic delight. On a colossal pedestal, the cliff—motionless at the extreme edge of the capping rock and sharply outlined against the sky—was an equestrian statue of impressive dignity. The figure of the man sat the figure of the horse, straight and soldierly, but with the repose of a Grecian god carved in the marble which limits the suggestion of activity. The gray costume harmonized with its aerial background; the metal of accouterment and caparison was softened and subdued by the shadow; the animal's skin had no points of highlight. A carbine strikingly foreshortened lay across the pommel of the saddle, kept in place by the right hand grasping it at the "grip"; the left hand, holding the bridle rein, was invisible. In silhouette against the sky the profile of the horse

was cut with the sharpness of a cameo; it looked across the heights of air to the confronting cliffs beyond. The face of the rider, turned slightly away, showed only an outline of temple and beard; he was looking downward to the bottom of the valley. Magnified by its lift against the sky and by the soldier's testifying sense of the formidableness of a near enemy, the group appeared of heroic, almost colossal, size.

For an instant Druse had a strange, half-defined feeling that he had slept to the end of the war and was looking upon a noble work of art reared upon that eminence to commemorate the deeds of a heroic past of which he had been an inglorious part. The feeling was dispelled by a slight movement of the group: the horse, without moving its feet, had drawn its body slightly backward from the verge; the man remained immobile as before. Broad awake and keenly alive to the significance of the situation, Druse now brought the butt of his rifle against his cheek by cautiously pushing the barrel forward through the bushes, cocked the piece,* and glancing through the sights covered a vital spot of the horseman's breast. A touch upon the trigger and all would have been well with Carter Druse. At that instant the horseman turned his head and looked in the direction of his concealed foeman—seemed to look into his very face, into his eyes, into his brave, compassionate heart.

Is it then so terrible to kill an enemy in war—an enemy who has surprised a secret vital to the safety of

one's self and comrades—an enemy more formidable for his knowledge than all his army for its numbers? Carter Druse grew pale; he shook in every limb, turned faint, and saw the statuesque group before him as black figures, rising, falling, moving unsteadily in arcs of circles in a fiery sky. His hand fell away from his weapon, his head slowly dropped until his face rested on the leaves in which he lay. This courageous gentleman and hardy soldier was near swooning from intensity of emotion.

It was not for long; in another moment his face was raised from earth, his hands resumed their places on the rifle, his forefinger sought the trigger; mind, heart, and eyes were clear, conscience and reason sound. He could not hope to capture that enemy; to alarm him would but send him dashing to his camp with his fatal news. The duty of the soldier was plain: the man must be shot dead from ambush—without warning, without a moment's spiritual preparation, with never so much as an unspoken prayer, he must be sent to his account.* But no—there is a hope; he may have discovered nothing—perhaps he is but admiring the sublimity of the landscape. If permitted, he may turn and ride carelessly away in the direction whence he came. Surely it will be possible to judge at the instant of his withdrawing whether he knows. It may well be that his fixity of attention—Druse turned his head and looked through the deeps of air downward, as from the surface to the bottom of a translucent sea. He saw creeping across the green meadow

a sinuous line of figures of men and horses—some foolish commander was permitting the soldiers of his escort to water their beasts in the open, in plain view from a dozen summits!

Druse withdrew his eyes from the valley and fixed them again upon the group of man and horse in the sky, and again it was through the sights of his rifle. But this time his aim was at the horse. In his memory, as if they were a divine mandate, rang the words of his father at their parting: "Whatever may occur, do what you conceive to be your duty." He was calm now. His teeth were firmly but not rigidly closed; his nerves were as tranquil as a sleeping babe's—not a tremor affected any muscle of his body; his breathing, until suspended in the act of taking aim, was regular and slow. Duty had conquered; the spirit had said to the body: "Peace, be still." He fired.

III

An officer of the Federal force, who in a spirit of adventure or in quest of knowledge had left the hidden bivouac in the valley, and with aimless feet had made his way to the lower edge of a small open space near the foot of the cliff, was considering what he had to gain by pushing his exploration further. At a distance of a quarter-mile before him, but apparently at a stone's throw, rose from its fringe of pines the gigantic face of rock, towering to so great a height above him that it made him giddy to look up

A Horseman in the Sky

to where its edge cut a sharp, rugged line against the sky. It presented a clean, vertical profile against a background of blue sky to a point half the way down, and of distant hills, hardly less blue, thence to the tops of the trees at its base. Lifting his eyes to the dizzy altitude of its summit the officer saw an astonishing sight—a man on horseback riding down into the valley through the air!

Straight upright sat the rider, in military fashion, with a firm seat in the saddle, a strong clutch upon the rein to hold his charger from too impetuous a plunge. From his bare head his long hair streamed upward, waving like a plume. His hands were concealed in the cloud of the horse's lifted mane. The animal's body was as level as if every hoof-stroke encountered the resistant earth. Its motions were those of a wild gallop, but even as the officer looked they ceased, with all the legs thrown sharply forward as in the act of alighting from a leap. But this was a flight!

Filled with amazement and terror by this apparition of a horseman in the sky—half believing himself the chosen scribe of some new Apocalypse,* the officer was overcome by the intensity of his emotions; his legs failed him and he fell. Almost at the same instant he heard a crashing sound in the trees—a sound that died without an echo—and all was still.

The officer rose to his feet, trembling. The familiar sensation of an abraded shin recalled his dazed faculties. Pulling himself together he ran rapidly

obliquely away from the cliff to a point distant from its foot; thereabout he expected to find his man; and thereabout he naturally failed. In the fleeting instant of his vision his imagination had been so wrought upon by the apparent grace and ease and intention of the marvelous performance that it did not occur to him that the line of march of aerial cavalry is directly downward, and that he could find the objects of his search at the very foot of the cliff. A half-hour later he returned to camp.

This officer was a wise man; he knew better than to tell an incredible truth. He said nothing of what he had seen. But when the commander asked him if in his scout he had learned anything of advantage to the expedition he answered:

· “Yes, sir. There is no road leading down into this valley from the southward.”

The commander, knowing better, smiled.

IV

After firing his shot, Private Carter Druse reloaded his rifle and resumed his watch. Ten minutes had hardly passed when a Federal sergeant crept cautiously to him on hands and knees. Druse neither turned his head nor looked at him, but lay without motion or sign of recognition.

“Did you fire?” the sergeant whispered.

“Yes.”

“At what?”

A Horseman in the Sky

“A horse. It was standing on yonder rock—pretty far out. You see it is no longer there. It went over the cliff.”

The man’s face was white, but he showed no other sign of emotion. Having answered, he turned away his eyes and said no more. The sergeant did not understand.

“See here, Druse,” he said, after a moment’s silence, “it’s no use making a mystery. I order you to report. Was there anybody on the horse?”

“Yes.”

“Well?”

“My father.”

The sergeant rose to his feet and walked away. “Good God!” he said.





**AN OCCURRENCE
AT OWL CREEK
BRIDGE**

I



man stood upon a railroad bridge in Northern Alabama, looking down into the swift waters twenty feet below. The man's hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord, A rope

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

loosely encircled his neck. It was attached to a stout cross-timber* above his head, and the slack fell to the level of his knees. Some loose boards laid upon the sleepers supporting the metals of the railway supplied a footing for him and his executioners—two private soldiers of the Federal army, directed by a sergeant, who in civil life may have been a deputy sheriff. At a short remove upon the same temporary platform was an officer in the uniform of his rank, armed. He was a captain. A sentinel at each end of the bridge stood with his rifle in the position known as “support”,* that is to say, vertical in front of the left shoulder, the hammer resting on the forearm thrown straight across the chest—a formal and unnatural position, enforcing an erect carriage of the body. It did not appear to be the duty of these two men to know what was occurring at the centre of the bridge: they merely blockaded the two ends of the foot planking that traversed it.

Beyond one of the sentinels nobody was in sight; the railroad ran straight away into a forest for a hundred yards, then, curving, was lost to view. Doubtless there was an outpost farther along. The other bank of the stream was open ground—a gentle acclivity topped with a stockade of vertical tree trunks, loopholed for rifles, with a single embrasure through which protruded the muzzle of a brass cannon commanding the bridge. Midway of the slope between bridge and fort were the spectators—a single company of infantry in line, at “parade rest,”*

the butts of the rifles on the ground, the barrels inclining slightly backward against the right shoulder, the hands crossed upon the stock. A lieutenant stood at the right of the line, the point of his sword upon the ground, his left hand resting upon his right. Excepting the group of four at the center of the bridge, not a man moved. The company faced the bridge, staring stonily, motionless. The sentinels, facing the banks of the stream, might have been statues to adorn the bridge. The captain stood with folded arms, silent, observing the work of his subordinates, but making no sign. Death is a dignitary who when he* comes announced is to be received with formal manifestations of respect, even by those most familiar with him. In the code of military etiquette silence and fixity are forms of deference.

The man who was engaged in being hanged was apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was a civilian, if one might judge from his habit, which was that of a planter. His features were good—a straight nose, firm mouth, broad forehead, from which his long, dark hair was combed straight back, falling behind his ears to the collar of his well-fitting frock coat. He wore a mustache and pointed beard, but no whiskers; his eyes were large and dark gray, and had a kindly expression which one would hardly have expected in one whose neck was in the hemp.* Evidently this was no vulgar assassin. The liberal military code makes provision for hanging many kinds of persons, and gentlemen are not excluded.

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

The preparations being complete, the two private soldiers stepped aside and each drew away the plank upon which he had been standing. The sergeant turned to the captain, saluted, and placed himself immediately behind that officer, who in turn moved apart one pace. These movements left the condemned man and the sergeant standing on the two ends of the same plank, which spanned three of the cross-ties of the bridge. The end upon which the civilian stood almost, but not quite, reached a fourth. This plank had been held in place by the weight of the captain; it was now held by that of the sergeant. At a signal from the former the latter would step aside, the plank would tilt and the condemned man go down between two ties. The arrangement commended itself to his judgment as simple and effective. His face had not been covered nor his eyes bandaged. He looked a moment at his "unsteadfast footing," then let his gaze wander to the swirling water of the stream racing madly beneath his feet. A piece of dancing driftwood caught his attention and his eyes followed it down the current. How slowly it appeared to move! What a sluggish stream!

He closed his eyes in order to fix his last thoughts upon his wife and children. The water, touched to gold by the early sun, the brooding mists under the banks at some distance down the stream, the fort, the soldiers, the piece of drift—all had distracted him. And now he became conscious of a new disturbance. Striking through the thought of his dear ones was a

sound which he could neither ignore nor understand, a sharp, distinct, metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith's hammer upon the anvil; it had the same ringing quality. He wondered what it was, and whether immeasurably distant or nearby—it seemed both. Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ear like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. What he heard was the ticking of his watch.

He unclosed his eyes and saw again the water below him. "If I could free my hands," he thought, "I might throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, reach the bank, take to the woods and and get away home. My home, thank God, is as yet outside their lines; my wife and little ones are still beyond the invader's farthest advance."

As these thoughts, which have here to be set down in words, were flashed into the doomed man's brain rather than evolved from it, the captain nodded to the sergeant. The sergeant stepped aside.

II

Peyton Farquhar was a well-to-do planter, of an old and highly respected Alabama family. Being a

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slave owner and like other slave owners a politician* he was naturally an original secessionist* and ardently devoted to the Southern cause. Circumstances of an imperious nature, which it is unnecessary to relate here, had prevented him from taking service with the gallant army that had fought the disastrous campaigns ending with the fall of Corinth,* and he chafed under the inglorious restraint, longing for the release of his energies, the larger life of the soldier, the opportunity for distinction. That opportunity, he felt, would come, as it comes to all in wartime. Meanwhile he did what he could. No service was too humble for him to perform in aid of the South, no adventure too perilous for him to undertake if consistent with the character of a civilian who was at heart a soldier, and who in good faith and without too much qualification assented to at least a part of the frankly villainous dictum that all is fair in love and war.*

One evening while Farquhar and his wife were sitting on a rustic bench near the entrance to his grounds, a gray-clad soldier rode up to the gate and asked for a drink of water. Mrs. Farquhar was only too happy to serve him with her own white hands. While she was fetching the water her husband approached the dusty horseman and inquired eagerly for news from the front.

“The Yanks are repairing the railroads,” said the man, “and are getting ready for another advance. They have reached the Owl Creek bridge, put it in-

order, and built a stockade on the north bank. The commandant has issued an order, which is posted everywhere, declaring that any civilian caught interfering with the railroad, its bridges, tunnels or trains will be summarily hanged. I saw the order."

"How far is it to the Owl Creek bridge?" Farquhar asked.

"About thirty miles."

"Is there no force on this side the creek?"

"Only a picket post half a mile out, on the railroad, and a single sentinel at this end of the bridge."

"Suppose a man—a civilian and student of hanging*—should elude the picket post and perhaps get the better of the sentinel," said Farquhar, smiling, "what could he accomplish?"

The soldier reflected. "I was there a month ago," he replied. "I observed that the flood of last winter had lodged a great quantity of driftwood against the wooden pier at this end of the bridge. It is now dry and would burn like tow."

The lady had now brought the water, which the soldier drank. He thanked her ceremoniously, bowed to her husband, and rode away. An hour later, after nightfall, he repassed the plantation, going northward in the direction from which he had come. He was a Federal scout.

III

As Peyton Farquhar fell straight downward through the bridge he lost consciousness and was as

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

one already dead. From this state he was awakened—ages later, it seemed to him—by the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through every fiber of his body and limbs. These pains appeared to flash along well-defined lines of ramification and to beat with an inconceivably rapid periodicity. They seemed like streams of pulsating fire heating him to an intolerable temperature. As to his head, he was conscious of nothing but a feeling of fullness—of congestion. These sensations were unaccompanied by thought. The intellectual part of his nature was already effaced; he had power only to feel, and feeling was torment. He was conscious of motion. Encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance, he swung through unthinkable arcs of oscillation, like a vast pendulum. Then all at once, with terrible suddenness, the light about him shot upward with the noise of a loud plash; a frightful roaring was in his ears, and all was cold and dark. The power of thought was restored; he knew that the rope had broken and he had fallen into the stream. There was no additional strangulation; the noose about his neck was already suffocating him and kept the water from his lungs. To die of hanging at the bottom of a river!—the idea seemed to him ludicrous. He opened his eyes in the darkness and saw above him a gleam of light, but how distant, how inaccessible! He was

still sinking, for the light became fainter and fainter until it was a mere glimmer. Then it began to grow and brighten, and he knew that he was rising toward the surface—knew it with reluctance, for he was now very comfortable. “To be hanged and drowned,” he thought, “that is not so bad, but I do not wish to be shot. No, I will not be shot. That is not fair.”

He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrist apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. What splendid effort! What magnificent, what superhuman strength! Ah, that was a fine endeavor! Bravo! The cord fell away; his arms parted and floated upward, the hands dimly seen on each side in the growing light. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside, its undulations resembling those of a water snake. “Put it back, put it back!” He thought he shouted these words to his hands, for the undoing of the noose had been succeeded by the direst pang that he had yet experienced. His neck ached horribly; his brain was on fire; his heart, which had been fluttering faintly, gave a great leap, trying to force itself out at his mouth. His whole body was racked and wrenched with an insupportable anguish! But his disobedient hands gave no heed to the command. They beat the water vigorously with quick, downward strokes, forcing him to the surface.

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He felt his head emerge; his eyes were blinded by the sunlight; his chest expanded convulsively, and with a supreme and crowning agony his lungs engulfed a great draught of air, which instantly he expelled in a shriek!

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were, indeed, preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of his organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf—saw the very insects upon them: the locusts, the brilliant-bodied flies, the gray spiders stretching their webs from twig to twig. He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the beating of the dragonflies' wings, the strokes of the water spiders' legs, like oars which had lifted their boat—all these made audible music. A fish slid along beneath his eyes and he heard the rush of its body parting the water.

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to wheel slowly round, himself the pivotal point, and he saw the bridge, the fort, the soldiers upon the bridge, the captain, the sergeant, the two privates, his executioners. They were in silhouette against the blue

sky. They shouted and gesticulated, pointing at him. The captain had drawn his pistol, but did not fire; the others were unarmed. Their movements were grotesque and horrible, their forms gigantic.

Suddenly he heard a sharp report and something struck the water smartly within a few inches of his head, spattering his face with spray. He heard a second report, and saw one of the sentinels with his rifle at his shoulder, a light cloud of blue smoke rising from the muzzle. The man in the water saw the eye of the man on the bridge gazing into his own through the sights of the rifle. He observed that it was a gray eye and remembered having read that gray eyes were keenest, and that all famous marksmen had them. Nevertheless, this one had missed.

A counterswirl had caught Farquhar and turned him half round; he was again looking into the forest on the bank opposite the fort. The sound of a clear, high voice in a monotonous singsong now rang out behind him and came across the water with a distinctness that pierced and subdued all other sounds, even the beating of the ripples in his ears. Although no soldier, he had frequented camps enough to know the dread significance of that deliberate, drawling aspirated chant; the lieutenant on shore was taking a part in the morning's work. How coldly and pitilessly—with what an even, calm intonation, presaging, and enforcing tranquillity in the men—with what accurately measured intervals fell those cruel words:

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge

“Attention, company!... Shoulder arms!... Ready!... Aim!... Fire!”

Farquhar dived—dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears like the voice of Niagara, yet he heard the dulled thunder of the volley and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, singularly flattened, oscillating slowly downward. Some of them touched him on the face and hands, then fell away, continuing their descent. One lodged between his collar and neck; it was uncomfortably warm and he snatched it out.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he had been a long time under water; he was perceptibly farther downstream—nearer to safety. The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets. The two sentinels fired again, independently and ineffectually.

The hunted man saw all this over his shoulder; he was now swimming vigorously with the current. His brain was as energetic as his arms and legs; he thought with the rapidity of lightning.

“The officer,” he reasoned, “will not make that martinet’s error a second time. It is as easy to dodge a volley as a single shot. He has probably already given the command to fire at will. God help me, I cannot dodge them all!”

An appalling splash within two yards of him was followed by a loud, rushing sound, diminuendo,

which seemed to travel back through the air to the fort and died in an explosion which stirred the very river to its depths! A rising sheet of water curved over him, fell down upon him, blinded him, strangled him! The cannon had taken a hand in the game. As he shook his head free from the commotion of the smitten water he heard the deflected shot humming through the air ahead, and in an instant it was cracking and smashing the branches in the forest beyond.

“They will not do that again,” he thought. “The next time they will use a charge of grape. I must keep my eye upon the gun. The smoke will apprise me—the report arrives too late; it lags behind the missile. That is a good gun.”

Suddenly he felt himself whirled round and round—spinning like a top. The water, the banks, the forests, the now distant bridge, fort and men—all were commingled and blurred. Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color—that was all he saw. He had been caught in a vortex and was being whirled on with a velocity of advance and gyration that made him giddy and sick. In a few moments he was flung upon the gravel at the foot of the left bank of the stream—the southern bank—and behind a projecting point which concealed him from his enemies. The sudden arrest of his motion, the abrasion of one of his hands on the gravel, restored him, and he wept with delight. He dug his fingers into the sand, threw it over

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himself in handfuls and audibly blessed it. It looked like diamonds, rubies, emeralds; he could think of nothing beautiful which it did not resemble. The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants: he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange, roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made in their branches the music of aeolian harps. He had no wish to perfect his escape—was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken.

A whiz and rattle of grapeshot among the branches high above his head roused him from his dream. The baffled cannoneer had fired him a random farewell. He sprang to his feet, rushed up the sloping bank, and plunged into the forest.

All that day he traveled, laying his course by the rounding sun. The forest seemed interminable; nowhere did he discover a break in it, not even a woodman's road. He had not known that he lived in so wild a region. There was something uncanny in the revelation.

By nightfall he was fatigued, footsore, famishing. The thought of his wife and children urged him on. At last he found a road which led him in what he knew to be the right direction. It was as wide and straight as a city street, yet it seemed untraveled. No fields bordered it, no dwelling anywhere. Not so much as the barking of a dog suggested human habitation. The black bodies of the trees formed a straight wall on both sides, terminating on the horizon in a

point, like a diagram in a lesson in perspective. Overhead, as he looked up through this rift in the wood, shone great golden stars looking unfamiliar and grouped in strange constellations. He was sure they were arranged in some order which had a secret and malign significance. The wood on either side was full of singular noises, among which—once, twice, and again—he distinctly heard whispers in an unknown tongue.

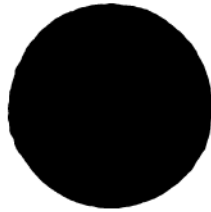
His neck was in pain and lifting his hand to it he found it horribly swollen. He knew that it had a circle of black where the rope had bruised it. His eyes felt congested; he could no longer close them. His tongue was swollen with thirst; he relieved its fever by thrusting it forward from between his teeth into the cold air. How softly the turf had carpeted the untraveled avenue—he could no longer feel the roadway beneath his feet!

Doubtless, despite his suffering, he had fallen asleep while walking, for now he sees another scene—perhaps he has merely recovered from a delirium. He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine. He must have traveled the entire night. As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife, looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting, with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how

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beautiful she is! He springs forward with extended arms. As he is about to clasp her he feels a stunning blow upon the back of the neck; a blinding white light blazes all about him with a sound like the shock of a cannon—then all is darkness and silence!

Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge.





CHICKAMAUGA*

ne sunny autumn afternoon
a child strayed away from its
rude home in a small field and entered a forest unob-
served. It was happy in a new sense of freedom from
control, happy in the opportunity of exploration

and adventure; for this child's spirit,* in bodies of its ancestors, had for thousands of years been trained to memorable feats of discovery and conquest—victories in battles whose critical moments were centuries, whose victors' camps were cities of hewn stone. From the cradle of its race it had conquered its way through two continents and passing a great sea had penetrated a third, there to be born to war and dominion as a heritage.

The child was a boy aged about six years, the son of a poor planter. In his younger manhood the father had been a soldier, had fought against naked savages and followed the flag of his country into the capital of a civilized race to the far South.* In the peaceful life of a planter the warrior-fire survived; once kindled, it is never extinguished. The man loved military books and pictures, and the boy had understood enough to make himself a wooden sword, though even the eye of his father would hardly have known it for what it was. This weapon he now bore bravely, as became the son of a heroic race, and pausing now and again in the sunny space of the forest, assumed, with some exaggeration, the postures of aggression and defense that he had been taught by the engraver's art. Made reckless by the ease with which he overcame invisible foes attempting to stay his advance, he committed the common enough military error of pushing the pursuit to a dangerous extreme, until he found himself upon the margin of a wide but shallow brook, whose rapid waters barred his direct advance against the flying foe

that had crossed with illogical ease. But the intrepid victor was not to be baffled; the spirit of the race which had passed the great sea burned unconquerable in that small breast and would not be denied. Finding a place where some boulders in the bed of the stream lay but a step or a leap apart, he made his way across and fell again upon the rear guard of his imaginary foe, putting all to the sword.

Now that the battle had been won, prudence required that he withdraw to his base of operations. Alas, like many a mightier conqueror, and like one, the mightiest,* he could not

curb the lust for war,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest
star.

Advancing from the bank of the creek he suddenly found himself confronted with a new and more formidable enemy: in the path that he was following, sat, bolt upright, with ears erect and paws suspended before it, a rabbit! With a startled cry the child turned and fled, he knew not in what direction, calling with inarticulate cries for his mother, weeping, stumbling, his tender skin cruelly torn by brambles, his little heart beating hard with terror—breathless, blind with tears—lost in the forest! Then, for more than an hour, he wandered with erring feet through the tangled undergrowth, till at last, overcome by fatigue, he lay down in a narrow space between two rocks, within a few yards of the

stream and still grasping his toy sword, no longer a weapon but a companion, sobbed himself to sleep.* The wood birds sang merrily above his head; the squirrels, whisking their bravery of tail, ran barking from tree to tree, unconscious of the pity of it, and somewhere far away was a strange, muffled thunder, as if the partridges were drumming in celebration of nature's victory over the son of her immemorial enslavers. And back at the little plantation, where white men and black were hastily searching the fields and hedges in alarm, a mother's heart was breaking for her missing child.

Hours passed, and then the little sleeper rose to his feet. The chill of the evening was in his limbs, the fear of the gloom in his heart. But he had rested, and he no longer wept. With some blind instinct which impelled to action he struggled through the undergrowth about him and came to a more open ground—on his right the brook, to the left a gentle acclivity studded with infrequent trees; over all, the gathering gloom of twilight. A thin, ghostly mist rose along the water. It frightened and repelled him; instead of recrossing, in the direction whence he had come, he turned his back upon it, and went forward toward the dark enclosing wood. Suddenly he saw before him a strange moving object which he took to be some large animal—a dog, a pig—he could not name it; perhaps it was a bear. He had seen pictures of bears, but knew of nothing to their discredit and had vaguely wished to meet one. But something in

form or movement of this object—something in the awkwardness of its approach—told him that it was not a bear, and curiosity was stayed by fear. He stood still and as it came slowly on gained courage every moment, for he saw that at least it had not the long, menacing ears of the rabbit. Possibly his impressionable mind was half conscious of something familiar in its shambling, awkward gait. Before it had approached near enough to resolve his doubts he saw that it was followed by another and another. To right and to left were many more; the whole open space about him was alive with them—all moving toward the brook.

They were men. They crept upon their hands and knees. They used their hands only, dragging their legs. They used their knees only, their arms hanging idle at their sides. They strove to rise to their feet, but fell prone in the attempt. They did nothing naturally, and nothing alike, save only to advance foot by foot in the same direction. Singly, in pairs and in little groups, they came on through the gloom, some halting now and again while others crept slowly past them, then resuming their movement. They came by dozens and by hundreds; as far on either hand as one could see in the deepening gloom they extended, and the black wood behind them appeared to be inexhaustible. The very ground seemed in motion toward the creek. Occasionally one who had paused did not again go on, but lay motionless. He was dead. Some, pausing, made strange gestures with their hands, erected their

arms and lowered them again, clasped their heads; spread their palms upward, as men are sometimes seen to do in public prayer.

Not all of this did the child note; it is what would have been noted by an elder observer; he saw little but that these were men, yet crept like babes. Being men, they were not terrible, though unfamiliarly clad. He moved among them freely, going from one to another and peering into their faces with childish curiosity. All their faces were singularly white and many were streaked and gouted with red. Something in this—something, too, perhaps, in their grotesque attitudes and movements—reminded him of the painted clown whom he had seen last summer in the circus, and he laughed as he watched them. But on and ever on they crept, these maimed and bleeding men, as heedless as he of the dramatic contrast between his laughter and their own ghastly gravity. To him it was a merry spectacle. He had seen his father's Negroes creep upon their hands and knees for his amusement—had ridden them so, “making believe” they were his horses. He now approached one of these crawling figures from behind and with an agile movement mounted it astride. The man sank upon his breast, recovered, flung the small boy fiercely to the ground as an unbroken colt might have done, then turned upon him a face that lacked a lower jaw—from the upper teeth to the throat was a great red gap fringed with hanging shreds of flesh and splinters of bone. The unnatural prominence of nose,

the absence of chin, the fierce eyes, gave this man the appearance of a great bird of prey crimsoned in throat and breast by the blood of its quarry. The man rose to his knees, the child to his feet. The man shook his fist at the child; the child, terrified at last, ran to a tree nearby, got upon the farther side of it, and took a more serious view of the situation. And so the clumsy multitude dragged itself slowly and painfully along in hideous pantomime—moved forward down the slope like a swarm of great black beetles, with never a sound of going—in silence profound, absolute.

Instead of darkening, the haunted landscape began to brighten. Through the belt of trees beyond the brook shone a strange red light, the trunks and branches of the trees making a black lacework against it. It struck the creeping figures and gave them monstrous shadows, which caricatured their movements on the lit grass. It fell upon their faces, touching their whiteness with a ruddy tinge, accentuating the stains with which so many of them were freckled and maculated. It sparkled on buttons and bits of metal in their clothing. Instinctively the child turned toward the growing splendor and moved down the slope with his horrible companions; in a few moments had passed the foremost of the throng—not much of a feat, considering his advantages. He placed himself in the lead, his wooden sword still in hand, and solemnly directed the march, conforming his pace to theirs and occasionally turn-

ing as if to see that his forces did not straggle. Surely such a leader never before had such a following.

Scattered about upon the ground now slowly narrowing by the encroachment of this awful march to water were certain articles to which, in the leader's mind, were coupled no significant associations: an occasional blanket, tightly rolled lengthwise, doubled and the ends bound together with a string; a heavy knapsack here, and there a broken rifle—such things, in short, as are found in the rear of retreating troops, the “spoor” of men flying from their hunters. Everywhere near the creek, which here had a margin of lowland, the earth was trodden into mud by the feet of men and horses. An observer of better experience in the use of his eyes would have noticed that these footprints pointed in both directions; the ground had been twice passed over—in advance and in retreat. A few hours before, these desperate, stricken men, with their more fortunate and now distant comrades, had penetrated the forest in thousands. Their successive battalions, breaking into swarms and re-forming in lines, had passed the child on every side—had almost trodden on him as he slept. The rustle and murmur of their march had not awakened him. Almost within a stone's throw of where he lay they had fought a battle; but all unheard by him were the roar of the musketry, the shock of the cannon, “the thunder of the captains and the shouting.”* He had slept through it all, grasping his little wooden sword with perhaps a tighter clutch in unconscious sym-

pathy with his martial environment, but as heedless of the grandeur of the struggle as the dead who had died to make the glory.

The fire beyond the belt of woods on the farther side of the creek, reflected to earth from the canopy of its own smoke, was now suffusing the whole landscape. It transformed the sinuous line of mist to the vapor of gold. The water gleamed with dashes of red, and red, too, were many of the stones protruding above the surface. But that was blood; the less desperately wounded had stained them in crossing. On them, too, the child now crossed with eager steps; he was going to the fire. As he stood upon the farther bank he turned about to look at the companions of his march. The advance was arriving at the creek. The stronger had already drawn themselves to the brink and plunged their faces into the flood. Three or four who lay without motion appeared to have no heads. At this the child's eyes expanded with wonder; even his hospitable understanding could not accept a phenomenon implying such vitality as that. After slaking their thirst these men had not had the strength to back away from the water, nor to keep their heads above it. They were drowned. In rear of these, the open spaces of the forest showed the leader as many formless figures of his grim command as at first; but not nearly so many were in motion. He waved his cap for their encouragement and smilingly pointed with his weapon in the direction of the guiding light—a pillar of fire to this strange exodus.

Confident of the fidelity of his forces, he now entered the belt of woods, passed through it easily in the red illumination, climbed a fence, ran across a field, turning now and again to coquet with his responsive shadow, and so approached the blazing ruin of a dwelling. Desolation everywhere! In all the wide glare not a living thing was visible. He cared nothing for that; the spectacle pleased, and he danced with glee in imitation of the wavering flames. He ran about, collecting fuel, but every object that he found was too heavy for him to cast in from the distance to which the heat limited his approach. In despair he flung in his sword—a surrender to the superior forces of nature. His military career was at an end.

Shifting his position, his eyes fell upon some out-buildings which had an oddly familiar appearance, as if he had dreamed of them. He stood considering them with wonder, when suddenly the entire plantation, with its inclosing forest, seemed to turn as if upon a pivot. His little world swung half around; the points of the compass were reversed. He recognised the blazing building as his own home!

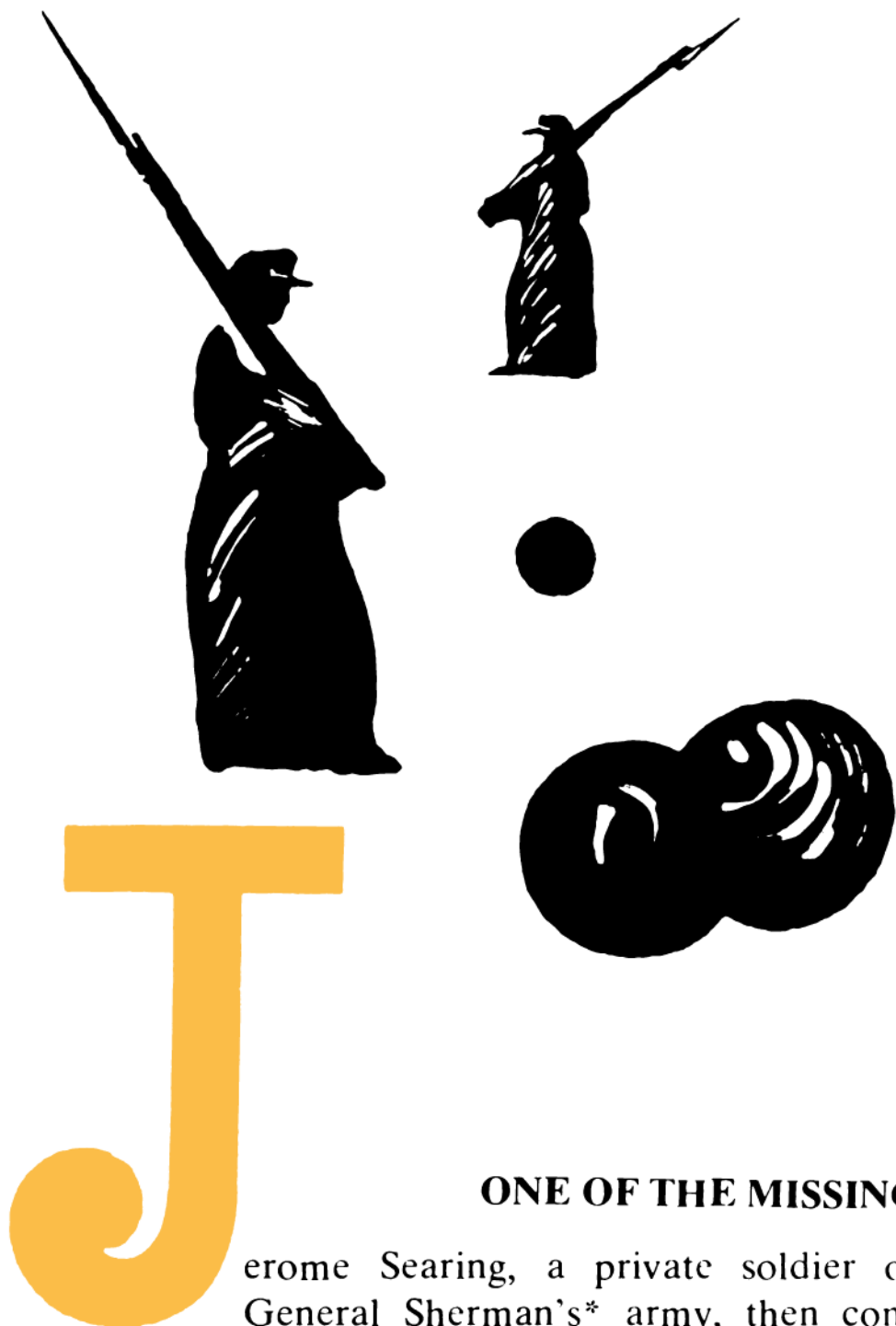
For a moment he stood stupefied by the power of the revelation, then ran with stumbling feet, making a half circuit of the ruin. There, conspicuous in the light of the conflagration, lay the dead body of a woman—the white face turned upward, the hands thrown out and clutched full of grass, the clothing deranged, the long dark hair in tangles and full of clotted blood. The greater part of the forehead was

torn away, and from the jagged hole the brain protruded, overflowing the temple, a frothy mass of gray, crowned with clusters of crimson bubbles—the work of a shell!

The child moved his little hands, making wild, uncertain gestures. He uttered a series of inarticulate and indescribable cries—something between the chattering of an ape and the gobbling of a turkey—a startling, soulless, unholy sound, the language of a devil. The child was a deaf mute.

Then he stood motionless, with quivering lips, looking down upon the wreck.





ONE OF THE MISSING

Jerome Searing, a private soldier of General Sherman's* army, then confronting the enemy at and about Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia,* turned his back upon a small group of officers with whom he had been talking in low

tones, stepped across a light line of earthworks, and disappeared in a forest. None of the men in line behind the works had said a word to him, nor had he so much as nodded to them in passing, but all who saw understood that this brave man had been entrusted with some perilous duty. Jerome Searing, though a private, did not serve in the ranks; he was detailed for service at division headquarters, being borne upon the rolls* as an orderly. "Orderly" is a word covering a multitude of duties. An orderly may be a messenger, a clerk, an officer's servant—anything. He may perform services for which no provision is made in orders and army regulations. Their nature may depend upon his aptitude, upon favor, upon accident. Private Searing, an incomparable marksman, young, hardy, intelligent and insensible to fear, was a scout. The general commanding his division was not content to obey orders blindly without knowing what was in his front, even when his command was not on detached service, but formed a fraction of the line of the army; nor was he satisfied to receive his knowledge of his vis-à-vis through the customary channels; he wanted to know more than he was apprised of by the corps commander and the collisions of pickets and skirmishers. Hence Jerome Searing, with his extraordinary daring, his woodcraft, his sharp eyes, and truthful tongue. On this occasion his instructions were simple: to get as near the enemy's lines as possible and learn all that he could.

In a few moments he had arrived at the picket line,

the men on duty there lying in groups of two and four behind little banks of earth scooped out of the slight depression in which they lay, their rifles protruding from the green boughs with which they had masked their small defenses. The forest extended without a break toward the front, so solemn and silent that only by an effort of the imagination could it be conceived as populous with armed men, alert and vigilant—a forest formidable with possibilities of battle. Pausing a moment in one of these rifle-pits to apprise the men of his intention, Searing crept stealthily forward on his hands and knees and was soon lost to view in a dense thicket of underbrush.

“That is the last of him,” said one of the men. “I wish I had his rifle. Those fellows will hurt some of us with it.”

Searing crept on, taking advantage of every accident of ground and growth to give himself better cover. His eyes penetrated everywhere, his ears took note of every sound. He stilled his breathing, and at the cracking of a twig beneath his knee stopped his progress and hugged the earth. It was slow work, but not tedious; the danger made it exciting, but by no physical signs was the excitement manifest. His pulse was as regular, his nerves were as steady as if he were trying to trap a sparrow.

“It seems a long time,” he thought, “but I cannot have come very far; I am still alive.”

He smiled at his own method of estimating distance, and crept forward. A moment later he sud-

denly flattened himself upon the earth and lay motionless, minute after minute. Through a narrow opening in the bushes he had caught sight of a small mound of yellow clay—one of the enemy's rifle-pits. After some little time he cautiously raised his head, inch by inch, then his body upon his hands, spread out on each side of him, all the while intently regarding the hillock of clay. In another moment he was upon his feet, rifle in hand, striding rapidly forward with little attempt at concealment. He had rightly interpreted the signs, whatever they were; the enemy was gone.

To assure himself beyond a doubt before going back to report upon so important a matter, Searing pushed forward across the line of abandoned pits, running from cover to cover in the more open forest, his eyes vigilant to discover possible stragglers. He came to the edge of a plantation—one of those forlorn, deserted homesteads of the last years of the war, upgrown with brambles, ugly with broken fences, and desolate with vacant buildings having blank apertures in place of doors and windows. After a keen reconnoissance from the safe seclusion of a clump of young pines, Searing ran lightly across a field and through an orchard to a small structure which stood apart from the other farm buildings, on a slight elevation. This he thought would enable him to overlook a large scope of country in the direction that he supposed the enemy to have taken in withdrawing. This building, which had originally consisted of a

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single room elevated upon four posts about ten feet high, was now little more than a roof; the floor had fallen away, the joists and planks loosely piled on the ground below or resting on end at various angles, not wholly torn from their fastenings above. The supporting posts were themselves no longer vertical. It looked as if the whole edifice would go down at the touch of a finger.

Concealing himself in the debris of joists and flooring, Searing looked across the open ground between his point of view and a spur of Kennesaw Mountain, a half-mile away. A road leading up and across this spur was crowded with troops—the rear guard of the retiring enemy, their gun barrels gleaming in the morning sunlight.

Searing had now learned all that he could hope to know. It was his duty to return to his own command with all possible speed and report his discovery. But the gray column of Confederates toiling up the mountain road was singularly tempting. His rifle—an ordinary “Springfield,” but fitted with a globe sight* and hair-trigger—would easily send its ounce and a quarter of lead hissing into their midst. That would probably not affect the duration and result of the war, but it is the business of a soldier to kill. It is also his habit if he is a good soldier. Searing cocked his rifle and “set” the trigger.

But it was decreed from the beginning of time that Private Searing was not to murder anybody that bright summer morning, nor was the Confederate re-

treat to be announced by him. For countless ages events had been so matching themselves together in that wondrous mosaic to some parts of which, dimly discernible, we give the name of history, that the acts which he had in will would have marred the harmony of the pattern. Some twenty-five years previously the Power* charged with the execution of the work according to the design had provided against that mischance by causing the birth of a certain male child in a little village at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, had carefully reared it, supervised its education, directed its desires into a military channel, and in due time made it an officer of artillery. By the concurrence of an infinite number of favoring influences and their preponderance over an infinite number of opposing ones, this officer of artillery had been made to commit a breach of discipline and flee from his native country to avoid punishment. He had been directed to New Orleans (instead of New York),* where a recruiting officer awaited him on the wharf. He was enlisted and promoted, and things were so ordered that he now commanded a Confederate battery some two miles along the line from where Jerome Searing, the Federal scout, stood cocking his rifle. Nothing had been neglected—at every step in the progress of both these men's lives, and in the lives of their contemporaries and ancestors, and in the lives of the contemporaries of their ancestors, the right thing had been done to bring about the desired result. Had anything in all this vast concate-

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nation been overlooked Private Searing might have fired on the retreating Confederates that morning, and perhaps have missed. As it fell out, a Confederate captain of artillery, having nothing better to do while awaiting his turn to pull out and be off, amused himself by sighting a field-piece obliquely to his right at what he mistook for some Federal officers on the crest of a hill, and discharged it. The shot flew high of its mark.*

As Jerome Searing drew back the hammer of his rifle and with his eyes upon the distant Confederates considered where he could plant his shot with the best hope of making a widow or an orphan or a childless mother—perhaps all three, for Private Searing, although he had repeatedly refused promotion, was not without a certain kind of ambition—he heard a rushing sound in the air, like that made by the wings of a great bird swooping down upon its prey. More quickly than he could apprehend the gradation, it increased to a hoarse and horrible roar, as the missile that made it sprang at him out of the sky, striking with a deafening impact one of the posts supporting the confusion of timbers above him, smashing it into matchwood, and bringing down the crazy edifice with a loud clatter, in clouds of blinding dust!

When Jerome Searing recovered consciousness he did not at once understand what had occurred. It was, indeed, some time before he opened his eyes. For a while he believed that he had died and been buried, and he tried to recall some portions of the burial

service. He thought that his wife was kneeling upon his grave, adding her weight to that of the earth upon his breast. The two of them, widow and earth, had crushed his coffin. Unless the children should persuade her to go home he would not much longer be able to breathe. He felt a sense of wrong. "I cannot speak to her," he thought. "The dead have no voice, and if I open my eyes I shall get them full of earth."

He opened his eyes. A great expanse of blue sky, rising from a fringe of the tops of trees. In the foreground, shutting out some of the trees, a high, dun mound, angular in outline and crossed by an intricate, patternless system of straight lines; the whole an immeasurable distance away—a distance so inconceivably great that it fatigued him, and he closed his eyes. The moment that he did so he was conscious of an insufferable light. A sound was in his ears like the low, rhythmic thunder of a distant sea breaking in successive waves upon the beach, and out of this noise, seeming a part of it, or possibly coming from beyond it, and intermingled with its ceaseless undertone, came the articulate words: "Jerome Searing, you are caught like a rat in a trap—in a trap, trap, trap."

Suddenly there fell a great silence, a black darkness, an infinite tranquillity, and Jerome Searing, perfectly conscious of his rathood,* and well assured of the trap that he was in, remembering all and nowise alarmed, again opened his eyes to reconnoi-

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ter, to note the strength of his enemy, to plan his defense.

He was caught in a reclining posture, his back firmly supported by a solid beam. Another lay across his breast, but he had been able to shrink a little away from it so that it no longer oppressed him, though it was immovable. A brace joining it at an angle had wedged him against a pile of boards on his left, fastening the arm on that side. His legs, slightly parted and straight along the ground, were covered upward to the knees with a mass of debris which towered above his narrow horizon. His head was as rigidly fixed as in a vise; he could move his eyes, his chin—no more. Only his right arm was partly free. “You must help us out of this,” he said to it. But he could not get it from under the heavy timber athwart* his chest, nor move it outward more than six inches at the elbow.

Searing was not seriously injured, nor did he suffer pain. A smart rap on the head from a flying fragment of the splintered post, incurred simultaneously with the frightfully sudden shock to the nervous system, had momentarily dazed him. His term of unconsciousness, including the period of recovery, during which he had had the strange fancies, had probably not exceeded a few seconds, for the dust of the wreck had not wholly cleared away as he began an intelligent survey of the situation.

With his partly free right hand he now tried to get hold of the beam that lay across, but not quite

against, his breast. In no way could he do so. He was unable to depress the shoulder so as to push the elbow beyond that edge of the timber which was nearest his knees; failing in that, he could not raise the forearm and hand to grasp the beam. The brace that made an angle with it downward and backward prevented him from doing anything in that direction, and between it and his body the space was not half so wide as the length of his forearm. Obviously he could not get his hand under the beam nor over it; the hand could not, in fact, touch it at all. Having demonstrated his inability, he desisted, and began to think whether he could reach any of the debris piled upon his legs.

In surveying the mass with a view to determining that point, his attention was arrested by what seemed to be a ring of shining metal immediately in front of his eyes. It appeared to him at first to surround some perfectly black substance, and it was somewhat more than a half-inch in diameter. It suddenly occurred to his mind that the blackness was simply shadow and that the ring was in fact the muzzle of his rifle protruding from the pile of debris. He was not long in satisfying himself that this was so—if it was a satisfaction. By closing either eye he could look a little way along the barrel—to the point where it was hidden by the rubbish that held it. He could see the one side, with the corresponding eye, at apparently the same angle as the other side with the other eye. Looking with the right eye, the weapon seemed to be

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directed at a point to the left of his head, and vice versa. He was unable to see the upper surface of the barrel, but could see the under surface of the stock at a slight angle. The piece was, in fact, aimed at the exact center of his forehead.

In the perception of this circumstance, in the recollection that just previously to the mischance of which this uncomfortable situation was the result he had cocked the rifle and set the trigger so that a touch would discharge it, Private Searing was affected with a feeling of uneasiness. But that was as far as possible from fear; he was a brave man, somewhat familiar with the aspect of rifles from that point of view, and of cannon, too. And now he recalled, with something like amusement, an incident of his experience at the storming of Missionary Ridge,* where, walking up to one of the enemy's embrasures from which he had seen a heavy gun throw charge after charge of grape* among the assailants, he had thought for a moment that the piece had been withdrawn; he could see nothing in the opening but a brazen circle. What that was he had understood just in time to step aside as it pitched another peck of iron down that swarming slope. To face firearms is one of the commonest incidents in a soldier's life—firearms, too, with malevolent eyes blazing behind them. That is what a soldier is for. Still, Private Searing did not altogether relish the situation, and turned away his eyes.

After groping, aimless, with his right hand for a time he made an ineffectual attempt to release his

left. Then he tried to disengage his head, the fixity of which was the more annoying from his ignorance of what held it. Next he tried to free his feet, but while exerting the powerful muscles of his legs for that purpose it occurred to him that a disturbance of the rubbish which held them might discharge the rifle; how it could have endured what had already befallen it he could not understand, although memory assisted him with several instances in point. One in particular he recalled, in which in a moment of mental abstraction he had clubbed his rifle and beaten out another gentleman's brains, observing afterward that the weapon which he had been diligently swinging by the muzzle was loaded, capped, and at full cock—knowledge of which circumstances would doubtless have cheered his antagonist to longer endurance. He had always smiled in recalling that blunder of his "green and salad days" as a soldier, but now he did not smile. He turned his eyes again to the muzzle of the rifle and for a moment fancied that it had moved; it seemed somewhat nearer.

Again he looked away. The tops of the distant trees beyond the bounds of the plantation interested him: he had not before observed how light and feathery they were, nor how darkly blue the sky was, even among their branches, where they somewhat paled it with their green; above him it appeared almost black. "It will be uncomfortably hot here," he thought, "as the day advances. I wonder which way I am looking."

Judging by such shadows as he could see, he

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decided that his face was due north; he would at least not have the sun in his eyes, and north—well, that was toward his wife and children.

“Bah!” he exclaimed aloud, “what have they to do with it?”

He closed his eyes. “As I can’t get out I may as well go to sleep. The rebels are gone and some of our fellows are sure to stray out here foraging. They’ll find me.”

But he did not sleep. Gradually he became sensible of a pain in his forehead—a dull ache, hardly perceptible at first, but growing more and more uncomfortable. He opened his eyes and it was gone—closed them and it returned. “The devil!” he said, irrelevantly, and stared again at the sky. He heard the singing of birds, the strange metallic note of the meadow lark, suggesting the clash of vibrant blades. He fell into pleasant memories of his childhood, played again with his brother and sister, raced across the fields, shouting to alarm the sedentary larks, entered the somber forest beyond and with timid steps followed the faint path to Ghost Rock, standing at last with audible heartthrobs before the Dead Man’s Cave and seeking to penetrate its awful mystery. For the first time he observed that the opening of the haunted cavern was encircled by a ring of metal. Then all else vanished and left him gazing into the barrel of his rifle as before. But whereas before it had seemed nearer, it now seemed an inconceivable distance away, and all the more sinister for that. He

cried out and, startled by something in his own voice—the note of fear—lied to himself in denial: “If I don’t sing out I may stay here till I die.”

He now made no further attempt to evade the menacing stare of the gun barrel. If he turned away his eyes an instant it was to look for assistance (although he could not see the ground on either side of the ruin), and he permitted them to return, obedient to the imperative fascination. If he closed them it was from weariness, and instantly the poignant pain in his forehead—the prophecy and menace of the bullet—forced him to reopen them.

The tension of nerve and brain was too severe; nature came to his relief with intervals of unconsciousness. Reviving from one of these he became sensible of a sharp, smarting pain in his right hand, and when he worked his fingers together, or rubbed his palm with them, he could feel that they were wet and slippery. He could not see the hand, but he knew the sensation; it was running blood. In his delirium he had beaten it against the jagged fragments of the wreck, had clutched it full of splinters. He resolved that he would meet his fate more manly. He was a plain, common soldier, had no religion and not much philosophy; he could not die like a hero, with great and wise last words, even if there had been someone to hear them, but he could die “game,” and he would. But if he could only know when to expect the shot!

Some rats which had probably inhabited the shed

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came sneaking and scampering about. One of them mounted the pile of debris that held the rifle; another followed and another. Searing regarded that at first with indifference, then with friendly interest; then, as the thought flashed into his bewildered mind that they might touch the trigger of his rifle, he cursed them and ordered them to go away. "It is no business of yours," he cried.

The creatures went away; they would return later, attack his face, gnaw away his nose, cut his throat—he knew that, but he hoped by that time to be dead.

Nothing could now unfix* his gaze from the little ring of metal with its black interior. The pain in his forehead was fierce and incessant. He felt it gradually penetrating the brain more and more deeply, until at last its progress was arrested by the wood at the back of his head. It grew momentarily more insufferable: he began wantonly beating his lacerated hand against the splinters again to counteract that horrible ache. It seemed to throb with a slow, regular recurrence, each pulsation sharper than the preceding, and sometimes he cried out, thinking he felt the fatal bullet. No thoughts of home, of wife and children, of country, of glory. The whole record of memory was effaced. The world had passed away—not a vestige remained. Here in this confusion of timbers and boards is the sole universe. Here is immortality in time—each pain an everlasting life. The throbs tick off eternities.

Jerome Searing, the man of courage, the formi-

dable enemy, the strong, resolute warrior, was as pale as a ghost. His jaw was fallen; his eyes protruded; he trembled in every fiber; a cold sweat bathed his entire body; he screamed with fear. He was not insane—he was terrified.

In groping about with his torn and bleeding hand he seized at last a strip of board, and, pulling, felt it give way. It lay parallel with his body, and by bending his elbow as much as the contracted space would permit, he could draw it a few inches at a time. Finally it was altogether loosened from the wreckage covering his legs; he could lift it clear of the ground its whole length. A great hope came into his mind: perhaps he could work it upward, that is to say backward, far enough to lift the end and push aside the rifle; or, if that were too tightly wedged, so place the strip of board as to deflect the bullet. With this object he passed it backward inch by inch, hardly daring to breathe lest that act somehow defeat his intent, and more than ever unable to remove his eyes from the rifle, which might perhaps now hasten to improve its waning opportunity. Something at least had been gained: in the occupation of his mind in this attempt at self-defense he was less sensible of the pain in his head and had ceased to wince. But he was still dreadfully frightened and his teeth rattled like castanets.

The strip of board ceased to move to the suasion of his hand. He tugged at it with all his strength, changed the direction of its length all he could, but it had met some extended obstruction behind him and

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the end in front was still too far away to clear the pile of debris and reach the muzzle of the gun. It extended, indeed, nearly as far as the trigger guard, which, uncovered by the rubbish, he could imperfectly see with his right eye. He tried to break the strip with his hand, but had no leverage. In his defeat, all his terror returned, augmented tenfold. The black aperture of the rifle appeared to threaten a sharper and more imminent death in punishment of his rebellion. The track of the bullet through his head ached with an intenser* anguish. He began to tremble again.

Suddenly he became composed. His tremor subsided. He clenched his teeth and drew down his eyebrows. He had not exhausted his means of defense; a new design had shaped itself in his mind—another plan of battle. Raising the front end of the strip of board, he carefully pushed it forward through the wreckage at the side of the rifle until it pressed against the trigger guard. Then he moved the end slowly outward until he could feel that it had cleared it, then, closing his eyes, thrust it against the trigger with all his strength! There was no explosion; the rifle had been discharged as it dropped from his hand when the building fell. But it did its work.

Lieutenant Adrian Searing, in command of the picket guard on that part of the line through which his brother Jerome had passed on his mission, sat with attentive ears in his breastwork behind the line. Not the faintest sound escaped him; the cry of a bird,

the barking of a squirrel, the noise of the wind among the pines—all were anxiously noted by his overstrained sense. Suddenly, directly in front of his line, he heard a faint, confused rumble, like the clatter of a falling building translated by distance. The lieutenant mechanically looked at his watch. Six o'clock and eighteen minutes. At the same moment an officer approached him on foot from the rear and saluted.

"Lieutenant," said the officer, "the colonel directs you to move forward your line and feel the enemy if you find him. If not, continue the advance until directed to halt. There is reason to think that the enemy has retreated."

The lieutenant nodded and said nothing; the other officer retired. In a moment the men, apprised of their duty by the noncommissioned officers in low tones, had deployed from their rifle-pits and were moving forward in skirmishing order, with set teeth and beating hearts.

This line of skirmishers sweeps across the plantation toward the mountain. They pass on both sides of the wrecked building, observing nothing. At a short distance in their rear their commander comes. He casts his eyes curiously upon the ruin and sees a dead body half buried in boards and timbers. It is so covered with dust that its clothing is Confederate gray. Its face is yellowish white; the cheeks are fallen in, the temples sunken, too, with sharp ridges about them, making the forehead forbiddingly narrow; the upper lip, slightly lifted, shows the white teeth,

One of the Missing

rigidly clenched. The hair is heavy with moisture, the face as wet as the dewy grass all about. From his point of view the officer does not observe the rifle; the man was apparently killed by the fall of the building.

“Dead a week,” said the officer curtly, moving on and absently pulling out his watch as if to verify his estimate of time. Six o’clock and forty minutes.





T

KILLED AT RESACA

he best soldier of our staff was Lieutenant Herman Brayle, one of the two aides-de-camp. I don't remember where the general picked him up; from some Ohio regiment, I think. None of us had previously known him,

and it would have been strange if we had, for no two of us came from the same state, nor even from adjoining states. The general seemed to think that a position on his staff was a distinction that should be so judiciously conferred as not to beget any sectional jealousies and imperil the integrity of that part of the country which was still an integer. He would not even choose officers from his own command, but by some jugglery at department headquarters obtained them from other brigades. Under such circumstances, a man's service had to be very distinguished indeed to be heard of by his family and the friends of his youth; and "the speaking trump of fame"* was a trifle hoarse from loquacity, anyhow.

Lieutenant Brayle was more than six feet in height and of splendid proportions, with the light hair and gray-blue eyes which men so gifted usually find associated with a high order of courage. As he was commonly in full uniform, especially in action, when most officers are content to be less flamboyantly attired, he was a very striking and conspicuous figure. As to the rest, he had a gentleman's manners, a scholar's head, and a lion's heart. His age was about thirty.

We all soon came to like Brayle as much as we admired him, and it was with sincere concern that in the engagement at Stone's River*—our first action after he joined us—we observed that he had one most objectionable and unsoldierly quality: he was vain of his courage. During all the vicissitudes and mutations

of that hideous encounter, whether our troops were fighting on the open cotton fields, in the cedar thickets, or behind the railway embankment, he did not once take cover, except when sternly commanded to do so by the general, who usually had other things to think of than the lives of his staff officers—or those of his men, for that matter.

In every later engagement while Brayle was with us it was the same way. He would sit his horse like an equestrian statue, in a storm of bullets and grape, in the most exposed places—wherever, in fact, duty, requiring him to go, permitted him to remain—when, without trouble and with distinct advantage to his reputation for common sense, he might have been in such security as is possible on a battlefield in the brief intervals of personal inaction.

On foot, from necessity or in deference to his dismounted commander or associates, his conduct was the same. He would stand like a rock in the open when officers and men alike had taken to cover; while men older in service and years, higher in rank and of unquestionable intrepidity, were loyally preserving behind the crest of a hill lives infinitely precious to their country, this fellow would stand, equally idle, on the ridge, facing in the direction of the sharpest fire.

When battles are going on in open ground it frequently occurs that the opposing lines, confronting each other within a stone's throw for hours, hug the earth as closely as if they loved it. The line officers in

their proper places flatten themselves no less, and the field officers, their horses all killed or sent to the rear, crouch beneath the infernal canopy of hissing lead and screaming iron without a thought of personal dignity.

In such circumstances the life of a staff officer of a brigade is distinctly not a happy one, mainly because of its precarious tenure and the unnerving alternations of emotion to which he is exposed. From a position of that comparative security from which a civilian would ascribe his escape to a "miracle," he may be dispatched with an order to some commander of a prone regiment in the front line—a person for the moment inconspicuous and not always easy to find without a deal of search among men somewhat preoccupied, and in a din in which question and answer alike must be imparted in the sign language. It is customary in such cases to duck the head and scuttle away on a keen run,* an object of lively interest to some thousands of admiring marksmen. In returning—well, it is not customary to return.

Brayle's practice was different. He would consign his horse to the care of an orderly—he loved his horse—and walk quietly away on his perilous errand with never a stoop of the back, his splendid figure, accentuated by his uniform, holding the eye with a strange fascination. We watched him with suspended breath, our hearts in our mouths. On one occasion of this kind, indeed, one of our number, an impetuous stammerer, was so possessed by his emotion that he shouted at me:

“I’ll b-b-bet you t-two d-d-dollars they d-drop him b-b-before he g-gets to that d-d-ditch!”

I did not accept the brutal wager. I thought they would.

Let me do justice to a brave man’s memory; in all these needless exposures of life there was no visible bravado nor subsequent narration. In the few instances when some of us had ventured to remonstrate, Brayle had smiled pleasantly and made some light reply, which, however, had not encouraged a further pursuit of the subject. Once he said:

“Captain, if ever I come to grief by forgetting your advice, I hope my last moments will be cheered by the sound of your beloved voice breathing into my ear the blessed words, ‘I told you so.’ ”

We laughed at the captain—just why we could probably not have explained—and that afternoon when he was shot to rags from an ambuscade Brayle remained by the body for some time, adjusting the limbs with needless care—there in the middle of a road swept by gusts of grape and canister!* It is easy to condemn this kind of thing, and not very difficult to refrain from imitation, but it is impossible not to respect, and Brayle was liked none the less for the weakness which had so heroic an expression. We wished he were not a fool, but he went on that way to the end, sometimes hard hit, but always returning to duty about as good as new.

Of course, it came at last; he who ignores the law of probabilities challenges an adversary that is sel-

dom beaten. It was at Resaca, in Georgia, during the movement that resulted in the taking of Atlanta.* In front of our brigade the enemy's line of earthworks ran through open fields along a slight crest. At each end of this open ground we were close up to him in the woods, but the clear ground we could not hope to occupy until night, when darkness would enable us to burrow like moles and throw up earth. At this point our line was a quarter-mile away in the edge of a wood. Roughly we formed a semicircle, the enemy's fortified line being the chord of the arc.

"Lieutenant, go tell Colonel Ward to work up as close as he can get cover, and not to waste much ammunition in unnecessary firing. You may leave your horse."

When the general gave this direction we were in the fringe of the forest, near the right extremity of the arc. Colonel Ward was at the left. The suggestion to leave the horse obviously enough meant that Brayle was to take the longer line, through the woods and among the men. Indeed, the suggestion was needless; to go by the short route meant absolutely certain failure to deliver the message. Before anybody could interpose, Brayle had cantered lightly into the field and the enemy's works were crackling in conflagration.

"Stop that damned fool!" shouted the general.

A private of the escort, with more ambition than brains, spurred forward to obey, and within ten yards left himself and his horse dead on the field of honor.

Brayle was beyond recall, galloping easily along, parallel to the enemy and less than two hundred yards distant. He was a picture to see! His hat had been blown or shot from his head, and his long, blond hair rose and fell with the motion of his horse. He sat erect in the saddle, holding the reins lightly in his left hand, his right hanging carelessly at his side. An occasional glimpse of his handsome profile as he turned his head one way or the other proved that the interest which he took in what was going on was natural and without affectation.

The picture was intensely dramatic, but in no degree theatrical. Successive scores of rifles spat at him viciously as he came within range, and our own line in the edge of the timber broke out in visible and audible defense. No longer regardful of themselves or their orders, our fellows sprang to their feet, and swarming into the open sent broad sheets of bullets against the blazing crest of the offending works, which poured an answering fire into their unprotected groups with deadly effect. The artillery on both sides joined the battle, punctuating the rattle and roar with deep, earth-shaking explosions and tearing the air with storms of screaming grape, which from the enemy's side splintered the trees and spattered them with blood, and from ours defiled the smoke of his arms with banks and clouds of dust from his parapet.

My attention had been for a moment drawn to the general combat, but now, glancing down the unob-

scured avenue between these two thunderclouds, I saw Brayle, the cause of the carnage. Invisible now from either side, and equally dommed by friend and foe, he stood in the shot-swept space, motionless, his face toward the enemy. At some little distance lay his horse, I instantly saw what had stopped him.

As topographical engineer* I had, early in the day, made a hasty examination of the ground, and now remembered that at that point was a deep and sinuous gully, crossing half the field from the enemy's line, its general course at right angles to it. From where we now were it was invisible, and Brayle had evidently not known about it. Clearly, it was impassable. Its salient angles would have afforded him absolute security if he had chosen to be satisfied with the miracle already wrought in his favor and leapt into it. He could not go forward, he would not turn back; he stood awaiting death. It did not keep him long waiting.

By some mysterious coincidence, almost instantaneously as he fell, the firing ceased, a few desultory shots at long intervals serving rather to accentuate than break the silence. It was as if both sides had suddenly repented of their profitless crime. Four stretcher-bearers of ours, following a sergeant with a white flag, soon afterward moved unmolested into the field, and made straight for Brayle's body. Several Confederate officers and men came out to meet them, and with uncovered heads assisted them to take up their sacred burden. As it was borne

toward us we heard beyond the hostile works fifes and a muffled drum—a dirge. A generous enemy honored the fallen brave.

Among the dead man's effects was a soiled Russia-leather* pocketbook. In the distribution of mementos of our friend, which the general, as administrator, decreed, this fell to me.

A year after the close of the war, on my way to California, I opened and idly inspected it. Out of an overlooked compartment fell a letter without envelope or address. It was in a woman's handwriting, and began with words of endearment, but no name.

It had the following dateline: "San Francisco, Cal., July 9, 1862." The signature was "Darling," in marks of quotation. Incidentally, in the body of the text, the writer's full name was given—Marian Mendenhall.

The letter showed evidence of cultivation and good breeding, but it was an ordinary love letter, if a love letter can be ordinary. There was not much in it, but there was something. It was this:

"Mr. Winters, whom I shall always hate for it, has been telling that at some battle in Virginia, where he got his hurt, you were seen crouching behind a tree. I think he wants to injure you in my regard, which he knows the story would do if I believed it. I could bear to hear of my soldier lover's death, but not of his cowardice."

These were the words which on that sunny afternoon, in a distant region, had slain a hundred men. Is woman weak?

Killed at Resaca

One evening I called on Miss Mendenhall to return the letter to her. I intended, also, to tell her what she had done—but not that she did it. I found her in a handsome dwelling on Rincon Hill. She was beautiful, well-bred—in a word, charming.

“You knew Lieutenant Herman Brayle,” I said, rather abruptly. “You know, doubtless, that he fell in battle. Among his effects was found this letter from you. My errand here is to place it in your hands.”

She mechanically took the letter, glanced through it with deepening color, and then, looking at me with a smile, said:

“It is very good of you, though I am sure it was hardly worthwhile.” She started suddenly and changed color. “This stain,” she said, “is it—surely it is not—”

“Madam,” I said, “pardon me, but that is the blood of the truest and bravest heart that ever beat.”

She hastily flung the letter on the blazing coals. “Uh! I cannot bear the sight of blood!” she said. “How did he die?”

I had involuntarily risen to rescue that scrap of paper, sacred even to me, and now stood partly behind her. As she asked the question she turned her face about and slightly upward. The light of the burning letter was reflected in her eyes and touched her cheek with a tingle of crimson like the stain upon its page. I had never seen anything so beautiful as this detestable creature.

“He was bitten by a snake,” I replied.





T

THE COUP DE GRÂCE

he fighting had been hard and continuous; that was attested by all the senses. The very taste of battle was in the air. All was now over; it remained only to succor the wounded and bury the dead—to “tidy up a bit,” as

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the humorist of a burial squad put it. A good deal of "tidying up" was required. As far as one could see through the forests, among the splintered trees, lay wrecks of men and horses. Among them moved the stretcher-bearers, gathering and carrying away the few who showed signs of life. Most of the wounded had died of neglect while the right to minister to their wants was in dispute. It is an army regulation that the wounded must wait; the best way to care for them is to win the battle. It must be confessed that victory is a distinct advantage to a man requiring attention, but many do not live to avail themselves of it.

The dead were collected in groups of a dozen or a score and laid side by side in rows while the trenches were dug to receive them. Some, found at too great a distance from these rallying points, were buried where they lay. There was little attempt at identification, though in most cases, the burial parties being detailed to glean the same ground which they had assisted to reap, the names of the victorious dead were known and listed. The enemy's fallen had to be content with counting. But of that they got enough: many of them were counted several times, and the total, as given afterward in the official report of the victorious commander, denoted rather a hope than a result.

At some little distance from the spot where one of the burial parties had established its "bivouac of the dead," a man in the uniform of a Federal officer stood leaning against a tree. From his feet upward to

his neck his attitude was that of weariness reposing; but he turned his head uneasily from side to side; his mind was apparently not at rest. He was perhaps uncertain in which direction to go; he was not likely to remain long where he was, for already the level rays of the setting sun straggled redly through the open spaces of the wood and the weary soldiers were quitting their task for the day. He would hardly make a night of it alone there among the dead. Nine men in ten whom you meet after a battle inquire the way to some fraction of the army—as if anyone could know. Doubtless this officer was lost. After resting himself a moment he would presumably follow one of the retiring burial squads.

When all were gone he walked straightaway into the forest toward the red west, its light staining his face like blood. The air of confidence with which he now strode along showed that he was on familiar ground; he had recovered his bearings. The dead on his right and on his left were unregarded as he passed. An occasional low moan from some sorely stricken wretch whom the relief parties had not reached, and who would have to pass a comfortless night beneath the stars with his thirst to keep company, was equally unheeded. What, indeed, could the officer have done, being no surgeon and having no water?

At the head of a shallow ravine, a mere depression of the ground, lay a small group of bodies. He saw, and swerving suddenly from his course walked

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rapidly toward them. Scanning each one sharply as he passed, he stopped at last above one which lay at a slight remove from the others, near a clump of small trees. He looked at it narrowly. It seemed to stir. He stooped and laid his hand upon its face. It screamed.

The officer was Captain Downing Madwell, of a Massachusetts regiment of infantry, a daring and intelligent soldier, an honorable man.

In the regiment were two brothers named Halcrow—Caffal and Creede Halcrow. Caffal Halcrow was a sergcant in Captain Madwell's company, and these two men, the sergeant and the captain, were devoted friends. Insofar as disparity of rank, difference in duties and considerations of military discipline would permit they were commonly together. They had, indeed, grown up together from childhood. A habit of the heart is not easily broken off. Caffal Halcrow had nothing military in his taste nor disposition, but the thought of separation from his friend was disagreeable; he enlisted in the company in which Madwell was second lieutenant. Each had taken two steps upward in rank, but between the highest non-commissioned and the lowest commissioned officer the gulf is deep and wide, and the old relation was maintained with difficulty and a difference.

Creede Halcrow, the brother of Caffal, was the major of the regiment—a cynical, saturnine man,

between whom and Captain Madwell there was a natural antipathy which circumstances had nourished and strengthened to an active animosity. But for the restraining influence of their mutual relation to Caffal these two patriots would doubtless have endeavored to deprive their country of each other's services.

At the opening of the battle that morning the regiment was performing outpost duty a mile away from the main army. It was attacked and nearly surrounded in the forest, but stubbornly held its ground. During a lull in the fighting, Major Halcrow came to Captain Madwell. The two exchanged formal salutes, and the major said, "Captain, the colonel directs that you push your company to the head of this ravine and hold your place there until recalled. I need hardly apprise you of the dangerous character of the movement, but if you wish, you can, I suppose, turn over the command to your first lieutenant. I was not, however, directed to authorize the substitution; it is merely a suggestion of my own, unofficially made."

To this deadly insult Captain Madwell coolly replied:

"Sir, I invite you to accompany the movement. A mounted officer would be a conspicuous mark, and I have long held the opinion that it would be better if you were dead."

The art of repartee was cultivated in military circles as early as 1862.

A half-hour later Captain Madwell's company was driven from its position at the head of the ravine,

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with a loss of one-third its number. Among the fallen was Sergeant Halcrow. The regiment was soon afterward forced back to the main line, and at the close of the battle was miles away. The captain was now standing at the side of his subordinate and friend.

Sergeant Halcrow was mortally hurt. His clothing was deranged; it seemed to have been violently torn apart, exposing the abdomen. Some of the buttons of his jacket had been pulled off and lay on the ground beside him and fragments of his other garments were strewn about. His leather belt was parted and had apparently been dragged from beneath him as he lay. There had been no great effusion of blood. The only visible wound was a wide, ragged opening in the abdomen. It was defiled with earth and dead leaves. Protruding from it was a loop of small intestine. In all his experience Captain Madwell had not seen a wound like this. He could neither conjecture how it was made nor explain the attendant circumstances—the strangely torn clothing, the parted belt, the besmirching of the white skin. He knelt and made a closer examination. When he rose to his feet, he turned his eyes in different directions as if looking for an enemy. Fifty yards away, on the crest of a low, thinly wooded hill, he saw several dark objects moving about among the fallen men—a herd of swine. One stood with its back to him, its shoulders sharply

elevated. Its forefeet were upon a human body, its head was depressed and invisible. The bristly ridge of its chin showed black against the red west. Captain Madwell drew away his eyes and fixed them again upon the thing which had been his friend.

The man who had suffered these monstrous mutilations was alive. At intervals he moved his limbs; he moaned at every breath. He stared blankly into the face of his friend and if touched screamed. In his giant agony he had torn up the ground on which he lay; his clenched hands were full of leaves and twigs and earth. Articulate speech was beyond his power; it was impossible to know if he were sensible to anything but pain. The expression of his face was an appeal; his eyes were full of prayer. For what?

There was no misreading that look; the captain had too frequently seen it in eyes of those whose lips had still the power to formulate it by an entreaty for death. Consciously or unconsciously, this writhing fragment of humanity, this type and example of acute sensation, this handiwork of man and beast, this humble, unheroic Prometheus,* was imploring everything, all, the whole non-ego,* for the boon of oblivion. To the earth and the sky alike, to the trees, to the man, to whatever took form in sense or consciousness, this incarnate suffering addressed that silent plea.

For what, indeed? For that which we accord to even the meanest creature without sense to demand it, denying it only to the wretched of our own race:

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for the blessed release, the rite of uttermost compassion, the coup de grâce.

Captain Madwell spoke the name of his friend. He repeated it over and over without effect until emotion choked his utterance. His tears plashed upon the livid face beneath his own and blinded himself. He saw nothing but a blurred and moving object, but the moans were more distinct than ever, interrupted at briefer intervals by sharper shrieks. He turned away, struck his hand upon his forehead, and strode from the spot. The swine, catching sight of him, threw up their crimson muzzles, regarding him suspiciously a second, and then with a gruff, concerted grunt, raced away out of sight. A horse, its foreleg splintered by a cannon-shot, lifted its head sidewise from the ground and neighed piteously. Madwell stepped forward, drew his revolver and shot the poor beast between the eyes, narrowly observing its death struggle, which, contrary to his expectation, was violent and long; but at last it lay still. The tense muscles of its lips, which had uncovered the teeth in a horrible grin, relaxed; the sharp, clean-cut profile took on a look of profound peace and rest.

Along the distant, thinly wooded crest to westward the fringe of sunset fire had now nearly burned itself out. The light upon the trunks of the trees had faded to a tender gray; shadows were in their tops, like great dark birds a-perch. Night was coming and there were miles of haunted forest between Captain Madwell and camp. Yet he stood there at the side of the

dead animal, apparently lost to all sense of his surroundings. His eyes were bent upon the earth at his feet; his left hand hung loosely at his side, his right still held the pistol. Presently he lifted his face, turned it toward his dying friend and walked rapidly back to his side. He knelt upon one knee, cocked the weapon, placed the muzzle against the man's forehead, and turning away his eyes pulled the trigger. There was no report. He had used his last cartridge for the horse.

The sufferer moaned and his lips moved convulsively. The froth that ran from them had a tinge of blood.

Captain Madwell rose to his feet and drew his sword from the scabbard. He passed the fingers of his left hand along the edge from hilt to point. He held it out straight before him, as if to test his nerves. There was no visible tremor of the blade; the ray of bleak skylight that it reflected was steady and true. He stooped and with his left hand tore away the dying man's shirt, rose and placed the point of the sword just over the heart. This time he did not withdraw his eyes. Grasping the hilt with both hands, he thrust downward with all his strength and weight. The blade sank into the man's body—through his body into the earth; Captain Madwell came near falling forward upon his work. The dying man drew up his knees and at the same time threw his right arm across his breast and grasped the steel so tightly that the knuckles of the hand visibly whitened. By a violent but vain effort

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to withdraw the blade the wound was enlarged; a rill of blood escaped, running sinuously down into the deranged clothing. At that moment three men stepped silently forward from behind the clump of young trees which had concealed their approach. Two were hospital attendants and carried a stretcher.

The third was Major Creede Halcrow.





“**P**

**PARKER ADDERSON,
PHILOSOPHER**

risoner, what is your name?”

“As I am to lose it at daylight to-morrow morning it is hardly worth while concealing it. Parker Adderson.”

“Your rank?”

“A somewhat humble one; commissioned officers are too precious to be risked in the perilous business of a spy. I am a sergeant.”

“Of what regiment?”

“You must excuse me; my answer might, for anything I know, give you an idea of whose forces are in your front. Such knowledge as that is what I came into your lines to obtain, not to impart.”

“You are not without wit.”

“If you have the patience to wait you will find me dull enough to-morrow.”

“How do you know that you are to die to-morrow morning?”

“Among spies captured by night that is the custom. It is one of the nice observances of the profession.”

The general so far laid aside the dignity appropriate to a Confederate officer of high rank and wide renown as to smile. But no one in his power and out of his favor would have drawn any happy augury from that outward and visible sign of approval. It was neither genial nor infectious; it did not communicate itself to the other persons exposed to it—the caught spy who had provoked it and the armed guard who had brought him into the tent and now stood a little apart, watching his prisoner in the yellow candle-light. It was no part of that warrior’s duty to smile; he had been detailed for another purpose. The conversation was resumed; it was in character a trial for a capital offence.

“You admit, then, that you are a spy—that you

came into my camp, disguised as you are in the uniform of a Confederate soldier, to obtain information secretly regarding the numbers and disposition of my troops."

"Regarding, particularly, their numbers. Their disposition I already knew. It is morose."*

The general brightened again; the guard, with a severer sense of his responsibility, accentuated the austerity of his expression and stood a trifle more erect than before. Twirling his gray slouch hat round and round upon his forefinger, the spy took a leisurely survey of his surroundings. They were simple enough. The tent was a common "wall tent,"* about eight feet by ten in dimensions, lighted by a single tallow candle stuck into the haft of a bayonet, which was itself stuck into a pine table at which the general sat, now busily writing and apparently forgetful of his unwilling guest. An old rag carpet covered the earthen floor; an older leather trunk, a second chair and a roll of blankets were about all else that the tent contained; in General Clavering's command Confederate simplicity and penury of "pomp and circumstance"* had attained their highest development. On a large nail driven into the tent pole at the entrance was suspended a sword-belt supporting a long sabre, a pistol in its holster and, absurdly enough, a bowie-knife. Of that most unmilitary weapon it was the general's habit to explain that it was a souvenir of the peaceful days when he was a civilian.

It was a stormy night. The rain cascaded upon the

canvas in torrents, with the dull, drum-like sound familiar to dwellers in tents. As the whooping blasts charged upon it the frail structure shook and swayed and strained at its confining stakes and ropes.

The general finished writing, folded the half-sheet of paper and spoke to the soldier guarding Adderson: "Here, Tassman, take that to the adjutant-general; then return."

"And the prisoner, General?" said the soldier, saluting, with an inquiring glance in the direction of that unfortunate.

"Do as I said," replied the officer, curtly.

The soldier took the note and ducked himself out of the tent.* General Clavering turned his handsome face toward the Federal spy, looked him in the eyes, not unkindly, and said: "It is a bad night, my man."

"For me, yes."

"Do you guess what I have written?"

"Something worth reading, I dare say. And—perhaps it is my vanity—I venture to suppose that I am mentioned in it."

"Yes; it is a memorandum for an order to be read to the troops at *reveille* concerning your execution. Also some notes for the guidance of the provost-marshal in arranging the details of that event."

"I hope, General, the spectacle will be intelligently arranged, for I shall attend it myself."

"Have you any arrangements of your own that you wish to make? Do you wish to see a chaplain, for example?"

"I could hardly secure a longer rest for myself by depriving him of some of his."

"Good God, man! do you mean to go to your death with nothing but jokes upon your lips? Do you know that this is a serious matter?"

"How can I know that? I have never been dead in all my life. I have heard that death is a serious matter, but never from any of those who have experienced it."

The general was silent for a moment; the man interested, perhaps amused him—a type not previously encountered.

"Death," he said, "is at least a loss—a loss of such happiness as we have, and of opportunities for more."

"A loss of which we shall never be conscious can be borne with composure and therefore expected without apprehension. You must have observed, General, that of all the dead men with whom it is your soldierly pleasure to strew your path none shows signs of regret."

"If the being dead is not a regrettable condition, yet the becoming so—the act of dying—appears to be distinctly disagreeable to one who has not lost the power to feel."

"Pain is disagreeable, no doubt. I never suffer it without more or less discomfort. But he who lives longest is most exposed to it. What you call dying is simply the last pain—there is really no such thing as dying. Suppose, for illustration, that I attempt to

escape. You lift the revolver that you are courteously concealing in your lap, and——”

The general blushed like a girl, then laughed softly, disclosing his brilliant teeth, made a slight inclination of his handsome head and said nothing. The spy continued: “You fire, and I have in my stomach what I did not swallow. I fall, but am not dead. After a half-hour of agony I am dead. But at any given instant of that half-hour I was either alive or dead. There is no transition period.

“When I am hanged to-morrow morning it will be quite the same; while conscious I shall be living; when dead, unconscious. Nature appears to have ordered the matter quite in my interest—the way that I should have ordered it myself. It is so simple,” he added with a smile, “that it seems hardly worth while to be hanged at all.”

At the finish of his remarks there was a long silence. The general sat impassive, looking into the man’s face, but apparently not attentive to what had been said. It was as if his eyes had mounted guard over the prisoner while his mind concerned itself with other matters. Presently he drew a long, deep breath, shuddered, as one awakened from a dreadful dream, and exclaimed almost inaudibly: “Death is horrible!”—this man of death.

“It was horrible to our savage ancestors,” said the spy, gravely, “because they had not enough intelligence to dissociate the idea of consciousness from the idea of the physical forms in which it is mani-

fested—as an even lower order of intelligence, that of the monkey, for example, may be unable to imagine a house without inhabitants, and seeing a ruined hut fancies a suffering occupant. To us it is horrible because we have inherited the tendency to think it so, accounting for the notion by wild and fanciful theories of another world—as names of places give rise to legends explaining them and reasonless conduct to philosophies in justification. You can hang me, General, but there your power of evil ends; you cannot condemn me to heaven.”

The general appeared not to have heard; the spy's talk had merely turned his thoughts into an unfamiliar channel, but there they pursued their will independently to conclusions of their own. The storm had ceased, and something of the solemn spirit of the night had imparted itself to his reflections, giving them the sombre tinge of a supernatural dread. Perhaps there was an element of prescience in it. “I should not like to die,” he said—“not tonight.”

He was interrupted—if, indeed, he had intended to speak further—by the entrance of an officer of his staff, Captain Hasterlick, the provost-marshal. This recalled him to himself; the absent look passed away from his face.

“Captain,” he said, acknowledging the officer's salute, “this man is a Yankee* spy captured inside our lines with incriminating papers on him. He has confessed. How is the weather?”

“The storm is over, sir, and the moon shining.”

“Good; take a file of men, conduct him at once to the parade ground, and shoot him.”

A sharp cry broke from the spy’s lips. He threw himself forward, thrust out his neck, expanded his eyes, clenched his hands.

“Good God!” he cried hoarsely, almost inarticulately; “you do not mean that! You forget—I am not to die until morning.”

“I have said nothing of morning,” replied the general, coldly; “that was an assumption of your own. You die now.”

“But, General, I beg—I implore you to remember; I am to hang! It will take some time to erect the gallows—two hours—an hour. Spies are hanged; I have rights under military law. For Heaven’s sake, General, consider how short——”

“Captain, observe my directions.”

The officer drew his sword and fixing his eyes upon the prisoner pointed silently to the opening of the tent. The prisoner hesitated; the officer grasped him by the collar and pushed him gently forward. As he approached the tent pole the frantic man sprang to it and with cat-like agility seized the handle of the bowie-knife, plucked the weapon from the scabbard and thrusting the captain aside leaped upon the general with the fury of a madman, hurling him to the ground and falling headlong upon him as he lay. The table was overturned, the candle extinguished and they fought blindly in the darkness. The provost-marshal sprang to the assistance of his superior officer

and was himself prostrated upon the struggling forms. Curses and inarticulate cries of rage and pain came from the welter of limbs and bodies; the tent came down upon them and beneath its hampering and enveloping folds the struggle went on. Private Tassman, returning from his errand and dimly conjecturing the situation, threw down his rifle and laying hold of the flouncing canvas at random vainly tried to drag it off the men under it; and the sentinel who paced up and down in front, not daring to leave his beat though the skies should fall, discharged his rifle. The report alarmed the camp; drums beat the long roll and bugles sounded the assembly, bringing swarms of half-clad men into the moonlight, dressing as they ran, and falling into line at the sharp commands of their officers. This was well; being in line the men were under control; they stood at arms while the general's staff and the men of his escort brought order out of confusion by lifting off the fallen tent and pulling apart the breathless and bleeding actors in that strange contention.

Breathless, indeed, was one: the captain was dead; the handle of the bowie-knife, protruding from his throat, was pressed back beneath his chin until the end had caught in the angle of the jaw and the hand that delivered the blow had been unable to remove the weapon. In the dead man's hand was his sword, clenched with a grip that defied the strength of the living. Its blade was streaked with red to the hilt.

Lifted to his feet, the general sank back to the earth

with a moan and fainted. Besides his bruises he had two sword-thrusts—one through the thigh, the other through the shoulder.

The spy had suffered the least damage. Apart from a broken right arm, his wounds were such only as might have been incurred in an ordinary combat with nature's weapons. But he was dazed and seemed hardly to know what had occurred. He shrank away from those attending him, cowered upon the ground and uttered unintelligible remonstrances. His face, swollen by blows and stained with gouts of blood, nevertheless showed white beneath his disheveled hair—as white as that of a corpse.

“The man is not insane,” said the surgeon, preparing bandages and replying to a question; “he is suffering from fright. Who and what is he?”

Private Tassman began to explain. It was the opportunity of his life; he omitted nothing that could in any way accentuate the importance of his own relation to the night's events. When he had finished his story and was ready to begin it again nobody gave him any attention.

The general had now recovered consciousness. He raised himself upon his elbow, looked about him, and, seeing the spy crouching by a camp-fire, guarded, said simply:

“Take that man to the parade ground and shoot him.”

“The general's mind wanders,” said an officer standing near.

“His mind does *not* wander,” the adjutant-general said. “I have a memorandum from him about this business; he had given that same order to Hasterlick”—with a motion of the hand toward the dead provost-marshal—“and, by God! it shall be executed.”

Ten minutes later Sergeant Parker Adderson, of the Federal army, philosopher and wit, kneeling in the moonlight and begging incoherently for his life, was shot to death by twenty men. As the volley rang out upon the keen air of the midnight, General Clavering, lying white and still in the red glow of the camp-fire, opened his big blue eyes, looked pleasantly upon those about him and said: “How silent it all is!”

The surgeon looked at the adjutant-general, gravely and significantly. The patient’s eyes slowly closed, and thus he lay for a few moments; then, his face suffused with a smile of ineffable sweetness, he said, faintly: “I suppose this must be death,” and so passed away.





AN AFFAIR OF OUTPOSTS

I

*Concerning the wish
to be dead*



Two men sat in conversation. One was the Governor of the State. The year was 1861; the war was on and the Governor already famous for the intelligence and zeal with

which he directed all the powers and resources of his State to the service of the Union.

“What! *you?*” the Governor was saying in evident surprise—“You too want a military commission? Really, the fife and drumming must have effected a profound alteration in your convictions. In my character of recruiting sergeant I suppose I ought not to be fastidious, but”—there was a touch of irony in his manner—“well, have you forgotten that an oath of allegiance is required?”

“I have altered neither my convictions nor my sympathies,” said the other, tranquilly. “While my sympathies are with the South, as you do me the honor to recollect, I have never doubted that the North was in the right. I am a Southerner in fact and in feeling, but it is my habit in matters of importance to act as I think, not as I feel.”

The Governor was absently tapping his desk with a pencil; he did not immediately reply. After a while he said: “I have heard that there are all kinds of men in the world, so I suppose there are some like that, and doubtless you think yourself one. I’ve known you a long time and—pardon me—I don’t think so.”

“Then I am to understand that my application is denied?”

Unless you can remove my belief that your Southern sympathies are in some degree a disqualification, yes. I do not doubt your good faith, and I know you to be abundantly fitted by intelligence and special training for the duties of an officer. Your convictions,

you say, favor the Union cause, but I prefer a man with his heart in it. The heart is what men fight with.”

“Look here, Governor,” said the younger man, with a smile that had more light than warmth: “I have something up my sleeve—a qualification which I had hoped it would not be necessary to mention. A great military authority has given a simple recipe for being a good soldier: ‘Try always to get yourself killed.’ It is with that purpose that I wish to enter the service. I am not, perhaps, much of a patriot, but I wish to be dead.”

The Governor looked at him rather sharply, then a little coldly. “There is a simpler and franker way,” he said.

“In my family, sir,” was the reply, “we do not do that—no Armisted has ever done that.”

A long silence ensued and neither man looked at the other. Presently the Governor lifted his eyes from the pencil, which had resumed its tapping, and said:

“Who is she?”

“My wife.”

The Governor tossed the pencil into the desk, rose and walked two or three times across the room. Then he turned to Armisted, who also had risen, looked at him more coldly than before and said: “But the man—would it not be better that he—could not the country spare him better than it can spare you? Or are the Armisteds opposed to ‘the unwritten law’?”

The Armisteds, apparently, could feel an insult: the face of the younger man flushed, then paled, but he

subdued himself to the service of his purpose.

"The man's identity is unknown to me," he said, calmly enough.

"Pardon me," said the Governor, with even less of visible contrition than commonly underlies those words. After a moment's reflection he added: "I shall send you to-morrow a captain's commission in the Tenth Infantry, now at Nashville, Tennessee. Good night."

"Good night, sir. I thank you."

Left alone, the Governor remained for a time motionless, leaning against his desk. Presently he shrugged his shoulders as if throwing off a burden. "This is a bad business," he said.

Seating himself at a reading-table before the fire, he took up the book nearest his hand, absently opening it. His eyes fell upon this sentence:

"When God made it necessary for an unfaithful wife to lie about her husband in justification of her own sins He had the tenderness to endow men with the folly to believe her."

He looked at the title of the book; it was, *His Excellency the Fool*.

He flung the volume into the fire.

II

How to say what is worth hearing

The enemy, defeated in two days of battle at Pittsburg Landing,* had sullenly retired to Corinth,

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whence he had come. For manifest incompetence Grant,* whose beaten army had been saved from destruction and capture by Buell's* soldierly activity and skill, had been relieved of his command, which nevertheless had not been given to Buell, but to Halleck,* a man of unproved powers, a theorist, sluggish, irresolute. Foot by foot his troops, always deployed in line-of-battle to resist the enemy's bickering skirmishers, always entrenching against the columns that never came, advanced across the thirty miles of forest and swamp toward an antagonist prepared to vanish at contact, like a ghost at cockcrow. It was a campaign of "excursions and alarums,"* of reconnoissances and counter-marches, of cross-purposes and countermanded orders. For weeks the solemn farce held attention, luring distinguished civilians from fields of political ambition to see what they safely could of the horrors of war. Among these was our friend the Governor. At the headquarters of the army and in the camps of the troops from his State he was a familiar figure, attended by the several members of his personal staff, showily horsed, faultlessly betailored and bravely silk-hatted. Things of charm they were, rich in suggestions of peaceful lands beyond a sea of strife. The bedraggled soldier looked up from his trench as they passed, leaned upon his spade and audibly damned them to signify his sense of their ornamental irrelevance to the austerities of his trade.

"I think, Governor," said General Masterson one

day, going into informal session atop of his horse and throwing one leg across the pommel of his saddle, his favourite posture—"I think I would not ride any farther in that direction if I were you. We've nothing out there but a line of skirmishers. That, I presume, is why I was directed to put these siege guns here: if the skirmishers are driven in the enemy will die of dejection at being unable to haul them away—they're a trifle heavy."

There is reason to fear that the unstrained quality of this military humor dropped not as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath the civilian's silk hat. Anyhow he abated none of his dignity in recognition.

"I understand," he said, gravely, "that some of my men are out there—a company of the Tenth, commanded by Captain Armisted. I should like to meet him if you do not mind."

"He is worth meeting. But there's a bad bit of jungle out there, and I should advise that you leave your horse and"—with a look at the Governor's retinue—"your other impedimenta."

The Governor went forward alone and on foot. In a half-hour he had pushed through a tangled undergrowth covering a boggy soil and entered upon firm and more open ground. Here he found a half-company of infantry lounging behind a line of stacked rifles. The men wore their accoutrements—their belts, cartridge-boxes, haversacks and canteens. Some lying at full length on the dry leaves

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were fast asleep: others in small groups gossiped idly of this and that; a few played at cards*; none was far from the line of stacked arms. To the civilian's eye the scene was one of carelessness, confusion, indifference; a soldier would have observed expectancy and readiness.

At a little distance apart an officer in fatigue uniform, armed, sat on a fallen tree noting the approach of the visitor, to whom a sergeant, rising from one of the groups, now came forward.

"I wish to see Captain Armisted," said the Governor.

The sergeant eyed him narrowly, saying nothing, pointed to the officer, and taking a rifle from one of the stacks, accompanied him.

"This man wants to see you, sir," said the sergeant, saluting. The officer rose.

It would have been a sharp eye that would have recognized him. His hair, which but a few months before had been brown, was streaked with gray. His face, tanned by exposure, was seamed as with age. A long livid scar across the forehead marked the stroke of a sabre; one cheek was drawn and puckered by the work of a bullet. Only a woman of the loyal North would have thought the man handsome.

"Armisted—Captain," said the Governor, extending his hand, do you not know me?"

"I know you, sir, and I salute you—as the Governor of my State."

Lifting his right hand to the level of his eyes he

threw it outward and downward. In the code of military etiquette there is no provision for shaking hands. That of the civilian was withdrawn. If he felt either surprise or chagrin his face did not betray it.

"It is the hand that signed your commission," he said.

"And it is the hand——"

The sentence remains unfinished. The sharp report of a rifle came from the front, followed by another and another. A bullet hissed through the forest and struck a tree near by. The men sprang from the ground and even before the captain's high, clear voice was done intoning the command "Attention!" had fallen into line in rear of the stacked arms. Again—and now through the din of a crackling fusillade—sounded the strong, deliberate sing-song of authority: "Take . . . arms!" followed by the rattle of unlocking bayonets.

Bullets from the unseen enemy were now flying thick and fast, though mostly well spent and emitting the humming sound which signified interference by twigs and rotation in the plane of flight. Two or three of the men in the line were already struck and down. A few wounded men came limping awkwardly out of the undergrowth from the skirmish line in front; most of them did not pause, but held their way with white faces and set teeth to the rear.

Suddenly there was a deep, jarring report in front, followed by the startling rush of a shell, which passing overhead exploded in the edge of a thicket,

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setting afire the fallen leaves. Penetrating the din—seeming to float above it like the melody of a soaring bird—rang the slow, aspirated monotones of the captain's several commands, without emphasis, without accent, musical and restful as an evensong under the harvest moon. Familiar with this tranquilizing chant in moments of imminent peril, these raw soldiers of less than a year's training yielded themselves to the spell, executing its mandates with the composure and precision of veterans. Even the distinguished civilian behind his tree, hesitating between pride and terror, was accessible to its charm and suasion. He was conscious of a fortified resolution and ran away only when the skirmishers, under orders to rally on the reserve, came out of the woods like hunted hares and formed on the left of the stiff little line, breathing hard and thankful for the boon of breath.*

III

*The fighting of one whose heart
was not in the quarrel*

Guided in his retreat by that of the fugitive wounded, the Governor struggled bravely to the rear through the "bad bit of jungle." He was well winded and a trifle confused. Excepting a single rifle-shot now and again, there was no sound of strife behind him; the enemy was pulling himself together for a

new onset against an antagonist of whose numbers and tactical disposition he was in doubt. The fugitive felt that he would probably be spared to his country,* and only commended the arrangements of Providence to that end, but in leaping a small brook in more open ground one of the arrangements incurred the mischance of a disabling sprain at the ankle. He was unable to continue his flight, for he was too fat to hop, and after several vain attempts, causing intolerable pain, seated himself on the earth to nurse his ignoble disability and deprecate the military situation.

A brisk renewal of the firing broke out and stray bullets came flitting and droning by. Then came the crash of two clean, definite volleys, followed by a continuous rattle, through which he heard the yells and cheers of the combatants, punctuated by thunderclaps of cannon. All this told him that Armisted's little command was bitterly beset and fighting at close quarters. The wounded men whom he had distanced began to straggle by on either hand, their numbers visibly augmented by new levies from the line. Singly and by twos and threes, some supporting comrades more desperately hurt than themselves, but all deaf to his appeals for assistance, they sifted through the underbrush and disappeared. The firing was increasingly louder and more distinct, and presently the ailing fugitives were succeeded by men who strode with a firmer tread, occasionally facing about and discharging their pieces, then doggedly

resuming their retreat, reloading as they walked. Two or three fell as he looked, and lay motionless. One had enough of life left in him to make a pitiful attempt to drag himself to cover. A passing comrade paused beside him long enough to fire, appraised the poor devil's disability with a look and moved sullenly on, inserting a cartridge in his weapon.

In all this was none of the pomp of war—no hint of glory. Even in his distress and peril the helpless civilian could not forbear to contrast it with the gorgeous parades and reviews held in honor of himself—with the brilliant uniforms, the music, the banners, and the marching. It was an ugly and sickening business: to all that was artistic in his nature, revolting, brutal, in bad taste.

“Ugh!” he grunted, shuddering—“this is beastly! Where is the charm of it all? Where are the elevated sentiments, the devotion, the heroism, the——”

From a point somewhere near, in the direction of the pursuing enemy, rose the clear, deliberate sing-song of Captain Armisted.

“Stead-y, men —stead-y. Halt! Commence firing.”

The rattle of fewer than a score of rifles could be distinguished through the general uproar, and again that penetrating falsetto:

“Cease fir-ing. In re-treat ... maarch!”

In a few moments this remnant had drifted slowly past the Governor, all to the right of him as they faced in retiring, the men deployed at intervals of a half-dozen paces. At the extreme left and a few yards

behind came the captain. The civilian called out his name, but he did not hear. A swarm of men in gray now broke out of cover in pursuit, making directly for the spot where the Governor lay—some accident of the ground had caused them to converge upon that point: their line had become a crowd. In a last struggle for life and liberty the Governor attempted to rise, and looking back the captain saw him. Promptly, but with the same slow precision as before, he sang his commands:

“Skirm-ish-ers, halt!” The men stopped and according to rule turned to face the enemy.

“Ral-ly on the right!”—and they came in at a run, fixing bayonets and forming loosely on the man at that end of the line.

“Forward ... to save the Gov-ern-or of your State ... doub-le quick... maaarch!”

Only one man disobeyed this astonishing command! He was dead. With a cheer they sprang forward over the twenty or thirty paces between them and their task. The captain having a shorter distance to go arrived first—simultaneously with the enemy. A half-dozen hasty shots were fired at him, and the foremost man—a fellow of heroic stature, hatless and bare-breasted—made a vicious sweep at his head with a clubbed rifle.* The officer parried the blow at the cost of a broken arm and drove his sword to the hilt into the giant’s breast. As the body fell the weapon was wrenched from his hand and before he could pluck his revolver from the scabbard at his belt

another man leaped upon him like a tiger, fastening both hands upon his throat and bearing him backward upon the prostrate Governor, still struggling to rise. This man was promptly spitted upon the bayonet of a Federal sergeant and his death-grip on the captain's throat loosened by a kick upon each wrist. When the captain had risen he was at the rear of his men, who had all passed over and around him and were thrusting fiercely at their more numerous but less coherent antagonists. Nearly all the rifles on both sides were empty and in the crush there was neither time nor room to reload. The Confederates were at a disadvantage in that most of them lacked bayonets; they fought by bludgeoning—and a clubbed rifle is a formidable arm. The sound of the conflict was a clatter like that of the interlocking horns of battling bulls—now and then the pash of a crushed skull, an oath, or a grunt caused by the impact of a rifle's muzzle against the abdomen transfixed by its bayonet. Through an opening made by the fall of one of his men Captain Armisted sprang, with his dangling left arm; in his right hand a full-charged revolver, which he fired with rapidity and terrible effect into the thick of the gray crowd: but across the bodies of the slain the survivors in the front were pushed forward by their comrades in the rear till again they breasted the tireless bayonets. There were fewer bayonets now to breast—a beggarly half-dozen, all told.* A few minutes more of this rough work—a little fighting back to back—and all would be over.

Suddenly a lively firing was heard on the right and the left: a fresh line of Federal skirmishers came forward at a run, driving before them those parts of the Confederate line that had been separated by staying the advance of the centre. And behind these new and noisy combatants, at a distance of two or three hundred yards, could be seen, indistinct among the trees a line-of-battle!

Instinctively before retiring, the crowd in gray made a tremendous rush upon its handful of antagonists, overwhelming them by mere momentum and, unable to use weapons in the crush, trampled them, stamped savagely on their limbs, their bodies, their necks, their faces; then retiring with bloody feet across its own dead it joined the general rout and the incident was at an end.

IV

The great honor the great

The Governor, who had been unconscious, opened his eyes and stared about him, slowly recalling the day's events. A man in the uniform of a major was kneeling beside him; he was a surgeon. Grouped about were the civilian members of the Governor's staff, their faces expressing a natural solicitude regarding their officers. A little apart stood General Masterson addressing another officer and gesticulating with a cigar. He was saying: "It was the beautiful-

est fight* ever made—by God, sir, it was great!”

The beauty and greatness were attested by a row of dead, trimly disposed, and another of wounded, less formally placed, restless, half-naked, but bravely rebandaged.

“How do you feel, sir?” said the surgeon. “I find no wound.”

“I think I am all right,” the patient replied, sitting up. “It is that ankle.”

The surgeon transferred his attention to the ankle, cutting away the boot. All eyes followed the knife.

In moving the leg a folded paper was uncovered. The patient picked it up and carelessly opened it. It was a letter three months old, signed “Julia.” Catching sight of his name in it he read it. It was nothing very remarkable—merely a weak woman’s confession of unprofitable sin—the penitence of a faithless wife deserted by her betrayer. The letter had fallen from the pocket of Captain Armisted; the reader quietly transferred it to his own.

An aide-de-camp rode up and dismounted. Advancing to the Governor he saluted.

“Sir,” he said, “I am sorry to find you wounded—the Commanding General has not been informed. He presents his compliments and I am directed to say that he has ordered for to-morrow a grand review of the reserve corps in your honor. I venture to add that the General’s carriage is at your service if you are able to attend.”

“Be pleased to say to the Commanding General

that I am deeply touched by his kindness. If you have the patience to wait a few moments you shall convey a more definite reply.”

He smiled brightly and glancing at the surgeon and his assistants added: “At present—if you will permit an allusion to the horrors of peace—I am ‘in the hands of my friends.’ ”

The humor of the great is infectious; all laughed who heard.

“Where is Captain Armisted?” the Governor asked, not altogether carelessly.

The surgeon looked up from his work, pointing silently to the nearest body in the row of dead, the features discreetly covered with a handkerchief. It was so near that the great man could have laid his hand upon it, but he did not. He may have feared that it would bleed.*





THE STORY OF A CONSCIENCE

I

 Captain Parrol Hartroy stood at the advanced post of his picket-guard, talking in low tones with the sentinel. This post was on a turnpike which bisected the captain's camp, a half-mile in rear, though the camp was not in

sight from that point. The officer was apparently giving the soldier certain instructions—was perhaps merely inquiring if all were quiet in front. As the two stood talking a man approached them from the direction of the camp, carelessly whistling, and was promptly halted by the soldier. He was evidently a civilian—a tall person, coarsely clad in the home-made stuff of yellow gray, called “butternut,”* which was men’s only wear in the latter days of the Confederacy. On his head was a slouch felt hat, once white, from beneath which hung masses of uneven hair, seemingly unacquainted with either scissors or comb. The man’s face was rather striking; a broad forehead, high nose, and thin cheeks, the mouth invisible in the full dark beard, which seemed as neglected as the hair. The eyes were large and had that steadiness and fixity of attention which so frequently mark a considering intelligence and a will not easily turned from its purpose—so say those physiognomists who have that kind of eyes. On the whole, this was a man whom one would be likely to observe and be observed by. He carried a walking-stick freshly cut from the forest and his ailing* cowskin boots were white with dust.

“Show your pass,” said the Federal soldier, a trifle more imperiously perhaps than he would have thought necessary if he had not been under the eye of his commander, who with folded arms looked on from the roadside.

“ ‘Lowed you’d rec’lect me, Gineral,”* said the

wayfarer tranquilly, while producing the paper from the pocket of his coat. There was something in his tone—perhaps a faint suggestion of irony—which made his elevation of his obstructor to exalted rank less agreeable to that worthy warrior than promotion is commonly found to be. “You-all have to be purty pertickler, I reckon,” he added, in a more conciliatory tone, as if in half-apology for being halted.

Having read the pass, with his rifle resting on the ground, the soldier handed the document back without a word, shouldered his weapon, and returned to his commander. The civilian passed on in the middle of the road, and when he had penetrated the circumjacent Confederacy a few yards resumed his whistling and was soon out of sight beyond an angle in the road, which at that point entered a thin forest. Suddenly the officer undid his arms from his breast, drew a revolver from his belt and sprang forward at a run in the same direction, leaving his sentinel in gaping astonishment at his post. After making to the various visible forms of nature a solemn promise to be damned, that gentleman resumed the air of stolidity which is supposed to be appropriate to a state of alert military attention.

II

Captain Hartroy held an independent command.* His force consisted of a company of infantry, a squadron of cavalry, and a section of artillery, detached

from the army to which they belonged, to defend an important defile in the Cumberland Mountains in Tennessee. It was a field officer's command held by a line officer* promoted from the ranks, where he had quietly served until "discovered." His post was one of exceptional peril; its defense entailed a heavy responsibility and he had wisely been given corresponding discretionary powers, all the more necessary because of his distance from the main army, the precarious nature of his communications and the lawless character of the enemy's irregular troops infesting that region. He had strongly fortified his little camp, which embraced a village of a half-dozen dwellings and a country store, and had collected a considerable quantity of supplies. To a few resident civilians of known loyalty, with whom it was desirable to trade, and of whose services in various ways he sometimes availed himself, he had given written passes admitting them within his lines. It is easy to understand that an abuse of this privilege in the interest of the enemy might entail serious consequences. Captain Hartroy had made an order to the effect that any one so abusing it would be summarily shot.

While the sentinel had been examining the civilian's pass the captain had eyed the latter narrowly. He thought his appearance familiar and had at first no doubt of having given him the pass which had satisfied the sentinel. It was not until the man had got out of sight and hearing that his identity was disclosed by a revealing light from memory. With

soldierly promptness of decision the officer had acted on the revelation.

III

To any but a singularly self-possessed man the apparition of an officer of the military forces, formidably clad, bearing in one hand a sheathed sword and in the other a cocked revolver, and rushing in furious pursuit, is no doubt disquieting to a high degree; upon the man to whom the pursuit was in this instance directed it appeared to have no other effect than somewhat to intensify his tranquility. He might easily enough have escaped into the forest to the right or the left, but chose another course of action—turned and quietly faced the captain, saying as he came up: “I reckon ye must have something to say to me, which ye disremembered. What mout it be, neighbor?”

But the “neighbor” did not answer, being engaged in the unneighborly act of covering him with a cocked pistol.

“Surrender,” said the captain as calmly as a slight breathlessness from exertion would permit, “or you die.”

There was no menace in the manner of his demand; that was all in the matter and in the means of enforcing it. There was, too, something not altogether reassuring in the cold gray eyes that glanced along the barrel of the weapon. For a moment the

two men stood looking at each other in silence; then the civilian, with no appearance of fear—with as great apparent unconcern as when complying with the less austere demand of the sentinel—slowly pulled from his pocket the paper which had satisfied that humble functionary and held it out, saying:

“I reckon this ’ere parss from Mister Hartroy is——”

“The pass is a forgery,” the officer said, interrupting. “I am Captain Hartroy—and you are Dramer Brune.”

It would have required a sharp eye to observe the slight pallor of the civilian’s face at these words, and the only other manifestation attesting their significance was a voluntary relaxation of the thumb and fingers holding the dishonored paper, which, falling to the road, unheeded, was rolled by a gentle wind and then lay still, with a coating of dust, as in humiliation for the lie that it bore. A moment later the civilian, still looking unmoved into the barrel of the pistol, said:

“Yes, I am Dramer Brune, a Confederate spy, and your prisoner. I have on my person, as you will soon discover, a plan of your fort and its armament, a statement of the distribution of your men and their number, a map of the approaches, showing the positions of all your outposts. My life is fairly yours, but if you wish it taken in a more formal way than by your own hand, and if you are willing to spare me the indignity of marching into camp at the muzzle of

your pistol, I promise you that I will neither resist, escape, nor remonstrate, but will submit to whatever penalty may be imposed."

The officer lowered his pistol, uncocked it, and thrust it into its place in his belt. Brune advanced a step, extending his right hand.

"It is the hand of a traitor and a spy," said the officer coldly, and did not take it. The other bowed.

"Come," said the captain, "let us go to camp; you shall not die until to-morrow morning."

He turned his back upon his prisoner, and these two enigmatical men retraced their steps and soon passed the sentinel, who expressed his general sense of things by a needless and exaggerated salute to his commander.

IV

Early on the morning after these events the two men, captor and captive, sat in the tent of the former. A table was between them on which lay, among a number of letters, official and private, which the captain had written during the night, the incriminating papers found upon the spy. That gentleman had slept through the night in an adjoining tent, unguarded. Both, having breakfasted, were now smoking.

"Mr. Brune," said Captain Hartroy, "you probably do not understand why I recognized you in your disguise, nor how I was aware of your name."

"I have not sought to learn, Captain," the prisoner said with quiet dignity.

“Nevertheless I should like you to know—if the story will not offend. You will perceive that my knowledge of you goes back to the autumn of 1861. At that time you were a private in an Ohio regiment—a brave and trusted soldier. To the surprise and grief of your officers and comrades you deserted and went over to the enemy. Soon afterward you were captured in a skirmish, recognized, tried by court-martial and sentenced to be shot. Awaiting the execution of the sentence you were confined, unfettered, in a freight car standing on a side track of a railway.”

“At Grafton, Virginia,” said Brune, pushing the ashes from his cigar with the little finger of the hand holding it, and without looking up.

“At Grafton, Virginia,” the captain repeated. “One dark and stormy night a soldier who had just returned from a long, fatiguing march was put on guard over you. He sat on a cracker box inside the car, near the door, his rifle loaded and the bayonet fixed. You sat in a corner and his orders were to kill you if you attempted to rise.”

“But if I *asked* to rise he might call the corporal of the guard.”

“Yes. As the long silent hours wore away the soldier yielded to the demands of nature: he himself incurred the death penalty by sleeping at his post of duty.”

“You did.”

“What! you recognize me? you have known me all along?”

The captain had risen and was walking the floor of his tent, visibly excited. His face was flushed, the gray eyes had lost the cold, pitiless look which they had shown when Brune had seen them over the pistol barrel; they had softened wonderfully.

"I knew you," said the spy, with his customary tranquility, "the moment you faced me, demanding my surrender. In the circumstances it would have been hardly becoming in me to recall these matters. I am perhaps a traitor, certainly a spy; but I should not wish to seem a suppliant."

The captain had paused in his walk and was facing his prisoner. There was a singular huskiness in his voice as he spoke again.

"Mr. Brune, whatever your conscience may permit you to be, you saved my life at what you must have believed the cost of your own. Until I saw you yesterday when halted by my sentinel I believed you dead—thought that you had suffered the fate which through my own crime you might easily have escaped. You had only to step from the car and leave me to take your place before the firing-squad. You had a divine compassion. You pitied my fatigue. You let me sleep, watched over me, and as the time drew near for the relief-guard to come and detect me in my crime, you gently waked me. Ah, Brune, Brune, that was well done—that was g r e a t—that——"

The captain's voice failed him; the tears were running down his face and sparkled upon his beard and his breast. Resuming his seat at the table, he buried

his face in his arms and sobbed. All else was silence.

Suddenly the clear warble of a bugle was heard sounding the "assembly." The captain started and raised his wet face from his arms; it had turned ghastly pale. Outside, in the sunlight, were heard the stir of the men falling into line; the voices of the sergeants calling the roll; the tapping of the drummers as they braced their drums. The captain spoke again:

"I ought to have confessed my fault in order to relate the story of your magnanimity; it might have procured you a pardon. A hundred times I resolved to do so, but shame prevented. Besides, your sentence was just and righteous. Well, Heaven forgive me! I said nothing, and my regiment was soon afterward ordered to Tennessee and I never heard about you."

"It was all right, sir," said Brune, without visible emotion; "I escaped and returned to my colors—the Confederate colors. I should like to add that before deserting from the Federal service I had earnestly asked a discharge, on the ground of altered convictions. I was answered by punishment."

"Ah, but if I had suffered the penalty of my crime—if you had not generously given me the life that I accepted without gratitude you would not be again in the shadow and imminence of death."

The prisoner started slightly and a look of anxiety came into his face. One would have said, too, that he was surprised. At that moment a lieutenant, the adju-

The Story of a Conscience

tant, appeared at the opening of the tent and saluted. "Captain," he said, "the battalion is formed."

Captain Hartroy had recovered his composure. He turned to the officer and said: "Lieutenant, go to Captain Graham and say that I direct him to assume command of the battalion and parade it outside the parapet. This gentleman is a deserter and a spy; he is to be shot to death in the presence of the troops. He will accompany you, unbound and unguarded."

While the adjutant waited at the door the two men inside the tent rose and exchanged ceremonious bows, Brune immediately retiring.

Half an hour later an old negro cook, the only person left in camp except the commander, was so startled by the sound of a volley of musketry that he dropped the kettle that he was lifting from a fire. But for his consternation and the hissing which the contents of the kettle made among the embers, he might also have heard, nearer at hand, the single pistol shot with which Captain Hartroy renounced the life which in conscience he could no longer keep.

In compliance with the terms of a note that he left for the officer who succeeded him in command, he was buried, like the deserter and spy, without military honors; and in the solemn shadow of the mountain which knows no more of war the two sleep well in long-forgotten graves.





**ONE OFFICER,
ONE MAN**

Captain Graffenreid stood at the head of his company. The regiment was not engaged. It formed a part of the front line of battle, which stretched away to the right with a visible length of nearly two miles through

the open ground. The left flank was veiled by woods; to the right also the line was lost to sight, but it extended many miles. A hundred yards in rear was a second line, behind this, the reserve brigades and divisions in column. Batteries of artillery occupied the spaces between and crowned the low hills. Groups of horsemen—generals with their staffs and escorts, and field officers of regiments behind the colors—broke the regularity of the lines and columns. Numbers of these figures of interest had field glasses at their eyes and sat motionless, stolidly scanning the country in front; others came and went at a slow canter, bearing orders. There were squads of stretcher-bearers, ambulances, wagon trains with ammunition, and officers' servants in rear of all—of all that was visible—for still in rear of these, along the roads, extended for many miles all that vast multitude of noncombatants who with their various impedimenta are assigned to the inglorious but important duty of supplying the fighters' many needs.

An army in line of battle awaiting attack, or prepared to deliver it, present strange contrasts. At the front are precision, formality, fixity, and silence. Toward the rear these characteristics are less and less conspicuous, and finally, in point of space, are lost altogether in confusion, motion, and noise. The homogeneous becomes heterogeneous. Definition is lacking; repose is replaced by an apparently purposeless activity; harmony vanishes in hubbub, form in disorder. Commotion everywhere and ceaseless

unrest. The men who do not fight are never ready.

From his position at the right of his company in the front rank, Captain Graffenreid had an unobstructed outlook toward the enemy. A half-mile of open and nearly level ground lay before him, and beyond it an irregular wood, covering a slight acclivity; not a human being anywhere visible. He could imagine nothing more peaceful than the appearance of that pleasant landscape with its long stretches of brown fields over which the atmosphere was beginning to quiver in the heat of the morning sun. Not a sound came from forest or field—not even the barking of a dog or the crowing of a cock at the half-seen plantation house on the crest among the trees. Yet every man in those miles of men knew that he and death were face to face.

. Captain Graffenreid had never in his life seen an armed enemy, and the war in which his regiment was one of the first to take the field* was two years old. He had had the rare advantage of a military education, and when his comrades had marched to the front he had been detached for administrative service at the capital of his state, where it was thought that he could be most useful. Like a bad soldier he protested, and like a good one obeyed. In close official and personal relations with the governor of his state, and enjoying his confidence and favor, he had firmly refused promotion and seen his juniors elevated above him. Death had been busy in his distant regiment; vacancies among the field officers had

occurred again and again; but from a chivalrous feeling that war's rewards belonged of right to those who bore the storm and stress of battle, he had held his humble rank and generously advanced the fortunes of others. His silent devotion to principle had conquered at last: he had been relieved of his hateful duties and ordered to the front, and now, untried by fire, stood in the van of battle in command of a company of hardy veterans, to whom he had been only a name, and that name a byword. By none—not even by those of his brother officers in whose favor he had waived his rights—was his devotion to duty understood. They were too busy to be just; he was looked upon as one who had shirked his duty, until forced unwillingly into the field. Too proud to explain, yet not too insensible to feel, he could only endure and hope.

Of all the Federal army on that summer morning none had accepted battle more joyously than Ander-ton Graffenreid. His spirit was buoyant, his faculties were riotous. He was in a state of mental exaltation and scarcely could endure the enemy's tardiness in advancing to the attack. To him this was opportunity—for the result he cared nothing. Victory or defeat, as God might will. In one or in the other he should prove himself a soldier and a hero; he should vindicate his right to the respect of his men and the companionship of his brother officers—to the consideration of his superiors. How his heart leaped in his breast as the bugle sounded the stirring notes of

the "assembly"! With what a light tread, scarcely conscious of the earth beneath his feet, he strode forward at the head of his company, and how exultingly he noted the tactical dispositions which placed his regiment in the front line! And if perchance some memory came to him of a pair of dark eyes that might take on a tenderer light in reading the account of that day's doings, who shall blame him for the unmartial thought or count it a debasement of soldierly ardor?

Suddenly, from the forest a half-mile in front—apparently from among the upper branches of the trees, but really from the ridge beyond—rose a tall column of white smoke. A moment later came a deep, jarring explosion, followed—almost attended—by a hideous rushing sound that seemed to leap forward across the intervening space with inconceivable rapidity, rising from whisper to roar with too quick a gradation for attention to note the successive stages of its horrible progression! A visible tremor ran along the lines of men; all were startled into motion. Captain Graffenreid dodged and threw up his hands to one side of his head, palms outward. As he did so he heard a keen, ringing report, and saw on a hillside behind the line a fierce roll of smoke and dust—the shell's explosion. It had passed a hundred feet to his left! He heard, or fancied he heard, a low, mocking laugh, and turning in the direction whence it came saw the eyes of his first lieutenant fixed upon him with an unmistakable look of amusement. He looked along the line of faces in the front ranks. The

men were laughing. At him? The thought restored the color to his bloodless face—restored too much of it. His cheeks burned with a fever of shame.

The enemy's shot was not answered: the officer in command at that exposed part of the line had evidently no desire to provoke a cannonade. For the forbearance Captain Graffenreid was conscious of a sense of gratitude. He had not known that the flight of a projectile was a phenomenon of so appalling character. His conception of war had already undergone a profound change, and he was conscious that his new feeling was manifesting itself in visible perturbation. His blood was boiling in his veins; he had a choking sensation and felt that if he had a command to give it would be inaudible, or at least unintelligible. The hand in which he held his sword trembled; the other moved automatically, clutching at various parts of his clothing. He found a difficulty in standing still and fancied that his men observed it. Was it fear? He feared it was.

From somewhere away to the right came, as the wind served, a low, intermittent murmur like that of ocean in a storm—like that of a distant railway train—like that of wind among the pines—three sounds so nearly alike that the ear, unaided by the judgment, cannot distinguish them one from another. The eyes of the troops were drawn in that direction; the mounted officers turned their field glasses that way. Mingled with the sound was an irregular throbbing. He thought it, at first, the beating of his

fevered blood in his ears; next, the distant tapping of a bass drum.

"The ball is opened on the right flank," said an officer.

Captain Graffenreid understood: the sounds were musketry and artillery. He nodded and tried to smile. There was apparently nothing infectious in the smile.

Presently a light line of blue smoke puffs broke out along the edge of the wood in front, succeeded by a crackle of rifles. There were keen, sharp hissings in the air, terminating abruptly with a thump nearby. The man at Captain Graffenreid's side dropped his rifle; his knees gave way and he pitched awkwardly forward, falling upon his face. Somebody shouted "Lie down!" and the dead man was hardly distinguishable from the living. It looked as if those few rifle shots had slain ten thousand men. Only the field officers remained erect; their concession to the emergency consisted in dismounting and sending their horses to the shelter of the low hills immediately in rear.

Captain Graffenreid lay alongside the dead man, from beneath whose breast flowed a little rill of blood. It had a faint, sweetish odor that sickened him. The face was crushed into the earth and flattened. It looked yellow already, and was repulsive. Nothing suggested the glory of a soldier's death nor mitigated the loathsomeness of the incident. He could not turn his back upon the body without facing away from his company.

One Officer, One Man

He fixed his eyes upon the forest, where all again was silent. He tried to imagine what was going on there—the lines of troops forming to attack, the guns being pushed forward by hand to the edge of the open. He fancied he could see their black muzzles protruding from the undergrowth, ready to deliver their storm of missiles—such missiles as the one whose shriek had so unsettled his nerves. The distention of his eyes became painful. A mist seemed to gather before them; he could no longer see across the field, yet would not withdraw his gaze lest he see the dead man at his side.

The fire of battle was not now burning very brightly in this warrior's soul. From inaction had come introspection. He sought rather to analyze his feelings than distinguish himself by courage and devotion. The result was profoundly disappointing. He covered his face with his hands and groaned aloud.

The hoarse murmur of battle grew more and more distinct upon the right; the murmur had, indeed become a roar, the throbbing, a thunder. The sounds had worked round obliquely to the front; evidently the enemy's left was being driven back, and the propitious moment to move against the salient angle of his line would soon arrive. The silence and mystery in front were ominous; all felt that they boded evil to the assailants.

Behind the prostrate lines sounded the hoofbeats of galloping horses; the men turned to look. A dozen

staff officers were riding to the various brigade and regimental commanders, who had remounted. A moment more and there was a chorus of voices, all uttering out of time the same words—"Attention, battalion!" The men sprang to their feet and were aligned by the company commanders. They awaited the word "forward"—awaited, too, with beating hearts and set teeth the gusts of lead and iron that were to smite them at their first movement in obedience to that word. The word was not given; the tempest did not break out. The delay was hideous, maddening! It unnerved like a respite at the guillotine.

Captain Graffenreid stood at the head of his company, the dead man at his feet. He heard the battle on the right—rattle and crash of musketry, ceaseless thunder of cannon, desultory cheers of invisible combatants. He marked ascending clouds of smoke from distant forests. He noted the sinister silence of the forest in front. These contrasting extremes affected the whole range of his sensibilities. The strain upon his nervous organization was insupportable. He grew hot and cold by turns. He panted like a dog, and then forgot to breathe until reminded by vertigo.

Suddenly he grew calm. Glancing downward, his eyes had fallen upon his naked sword, as he held it, point to earth. Foreshortened to his view, it resembled somewhat, he thought, the short, heavy blade of the ancient Roman. The fancy was full of suggestion, malign, fateful, heroic!

One Officer, One Man

The sergeant in the rear rank, immediately behind Captain Graffenreid, now observed a strange sight. His attention drawn by an uncommon movement made by the captain—a sudden reaching forward of the hands and their energetic withdrawal, throwing the elbows out, as in pulling an oar—he saw spring from between the officer's shoulders a bright point of metal which prolonged itself outward, nearly a half-arm's length—a blade! It was faintly streaked with crimson, and its point approached so near to the sergeant's breast, and with so quick a movement, that he shrank backward in alarm. That moment Captain Graffenreid pitched heavily forward upon the dead man and died.

A week later the major general commanding the left corps of the Federal army submitted the following official report:

"Sir: I have the honor to report, with regard to the action of the 19th inst., that owing to the enemy's withdrawal from my front to reinforce his beaten left, my command was not seriously engaged. My loss was as follows: Killed, one officer, one man."





G

GEORGE THURSTON

**Three Incidents
in the Life of a Man**

George Thurston was a first lieutenant and aide-de-camp on the staff of Colonel Brough, commanding a Federal brigade. Colonel Brough was only temporarily in command, as senior colonel, the brigadier-

general having been severely wounded and granted a leave of absence to recover. Lieutenant Thurston was, I believe, of Colonel Brough's regiment, to which, with his chief, he would naturally have been relegated had he lived till our brigade commander's recovery. The aide whose place Thurston took had been killed in battle; Thurston's advent among us was the only change in the *personnel* of our staff consequent upon the change in commanders. We did not like him; he was unsocial. This, however, was more observed by others than by me. Whether in camp or on the march, in barracks, in tents, or *en bivouac*,* my duties as topographical engineer kept me working like a beaver—all day in the saddle and half the night at my drawing-table, platting my surveys.* It was hazardous work; the nearer to the enemy's line I could penetrate, the more valuable were my field notes and the resulting maps. It was a business in which the lives of men counted as nothing against the chance of defining a road or sketching a bridge. Whole squadrons of cavalry escort had sometimes to be sent thundering against a powerful infantry outpost in order that the brief time between the charge and the inevitable retreat might be utilized in sounding a ford or determining the point of intersection of two roads.

In some of the dark corners of England and Wales they have an immemorial custom of "beating the bounds" of the parish. On a certain day of the year the whole population turns out and travels in procession from one landmark to another on the boundary

line. At the most important points lads are soundly beaten with rods to make them remember the place in after life. They become authorities. Our frequent engagements with the Confederate outposts, patrols, and scouting parties had, incidentally, the same educating value; the fixed in my memory a vivid and apparently imperishable picture of the locality—a picture serving instead of accurate field notes, which, indeed, it was not always convenient to take, with carbines cracking, sabers clashing, and horses plunging all about. These spirited encounters were observations entered in red.*

One morning as I set out at the head of my escort on an expedition of more than the usual hazard Lieutenant Thurston rode up alongside and asked if I had any objection to his accompanying me, the colonel commanding having given him permission.

“None whatever,” I replied rather gruffly; “but in what capacity will you go? You are not a topographical engineer, and Captain Burling commands my escort.”

“I will go as a spectator,” he said. Removing his sword-belt and taking the pistols from his holsters he handed them to his servant, who took them back to headquarters. I realized the brutality of my remark, but not clearly seeing my way to an apology, said nothing.

That afternoon we encountered a whole regiment of the enemy’s cavalry in line and a field-piece* that dominated a straight mile of the turnpike by which we had approached. My escort fought deployed in the

woods on both sides, but Thurston remained in the center of the road, which at intervals of a few seconds was swept by gusts of grape and canister that tore the air wide open as they passed. He had dropped the rein on the neck of his horse and sat bolt upright in the saddle, with folded arms. Soon he was down, his horse torn to pieces. From the side of the road, my pencil and field book idle, my duty forgotten, I watched him slowly disengaging himself from the wreck and rising. At that instant, the cannon having ceased firing, a burly Confederate trooper on a spirited horse dashed like a thunderbolt down the road with drawn saber. Thurston saw him coming, drew himself up to his full height, and again folded his arms. He was too brave to retreat before the word, and my uncivil words had disarmed him. He was a spectator. Another moment and he would have been split like a mackerel, but a blessed bullet tumbled his assailant into the dusty road so near that the impetus sent the body rolling to Thurston's feet. That evening, while platting my hasty survey, I found time to frame an apology, which I think took the rude, primitive form of a confession that I had spoken like a malicious idiot.

A few weeks later a part of our army made an assault upon the enemy's left. The attack, which was made upon an unknown position and across unfamiliar ground, was led by our brigade. The ground was so broken and the underbrush so thick that all mounted officers and men were compelled to fight on

foot—the brigade commander and his staff included. In the *mêlée* Thurston was parted from the rest of us, and we found him, horribly wounded, only when we had taken the enemy's last defense. He was some months in hospital at Nashville, Tennessee,* but finally rejoined us. He said little about his misadventure, except that he had been bewildered and had strayed into the enemy's lines and been shot down; but from one of his captors, whom we in turn had captured, we learned the particulars. "He came walking right upon us as we lay in line," said the man. "A whole company of us instantly sprang up and leveled our rifles at his breast, some of them almost touching him. 'Throw down that sword and surrender, you damned Yank!' shouted some one in authority. The fellow ran his eyes along the line of rifle barrels, folded his arms across his breast, his right hand still clutching his sword, and deliberately replied, 'I will not.' If we had all fired he would have been torn to shreds. Some of us didn't. I didn't, for one; nothing could have induced me."

When one is tranquilly looking death in the eye and refusing him any concession one naturally has a good opinion of one's self. I don't know if it was this feeling that in Thurston found expression in a stiffish attitude and folded arms; at the mess table one day, in his absence, another explanation was suggested by our quartermaster, an irreclaimable stammerer when the wine was in: "It's h—is w—ay of m-m-mastering a c-c-consti-t-tutional t-tendency to r—un aw—ay."

“What!” I flamed out, indignantly rising; “you intimate that Thurston is a coward—and in his absence?”

“If he w—ere a cow—wow-ard h—e w—wouldn’t t-try to m-m-master it; and if he w—re p-present I wouldn’t d-d-dare to d-d-discuss it,” was the mollifying reply.

This interpid man, George Thurston, died an ignoble death. The brigade was in camp, with headquarters in a grove of immense trees. To an upper branch of one of these a venturesome climber had attached the two ends of a long rope and made a swing with a length of not less than one hundred feet. Plunging downward from a height of fifty feet, along the arc of a circle with such a radius, soaring to an equal altitude, pausing for one breathless instant, then sweeping dizzily backward—no one who has not tried it can conceive the terrors of such sport to the novice. Thurston came out of his tent one day and asked for instruction in the mystery of propelling the swing—the art of rising and sitting, which every boy has mastered. In a few moments he had acquired the trick and was swinging higher than the most experienced of us had dared. We shuddered to look at his fearful flights.

“St-t-top him,” said the quartermaster, snailing lazily along from the mess-tent where he had been lunching; “he—e d-doesn’t know that if h—e g-g-goes c-clear over h—e’ll w—ind up the sw—ing.”

With such energy was that strong man cannonad-

ing himself through the air that at each extremity of his increasing arc his body, standing in the swing, was almost horizontal. Should he once pass above the level of the rope's attachment he would be lost; the rope would slacken and he would fall vertically to a point as far below as he had gone above, and then the sudden tension of the rope would wrest it from his hands. All saw the peril—all cried out to him to desist, and gesticulated at him as, indistinct and with a noise like the rush of a cannon shot in flight, he swept past us through the lower reaches of his hideous oscillation. A woman standing at a little distance away fainted and fell unobserved. Men from the camp of a regiment near by ran in crowds to see, all shouting. Suddenly, as Thurston was on his upward curve, the shouts all ceased.

Thurston and the swing had parted—that is all that can be known; both hands at once had released the rope. The impetus of the light swing exhausted, it was falling back; the man's momentum was carrying him, almost erect, upward and forward, no longer in his arc, but with an outward curve. It could have been but an instant, yet it seemed an age. I cried out, or thought I cried out: "My God! will he never stop going up?" He passed close to the branch of a tree. I remember a feeling of delight as I thought he would clutch it and save himself. I speculated on the possibility of it sustaining his weight. He passed above it, and from my point of view was sharply outlined against the blue. At this distance of many years I can

George Thurston

distinctly recall that image of a man in the sky, its head erect, its feet close together, its hands—I do not see its hands. All at once, with astonishing suddenness and rapidity, it turns clear over and pitches downward. There is another cry from the crowd, which has rushed instinctively forward. The man has become merely a whirling object mostly legs. Then there is an indescribable sound—the sound of an impact that shakes the earth, and these men, familiar with death in its most awful aspects, turn sick. Many walk unsteadily away from the spot; others support themselves against the trunks of trees or sit at the roots. Death has taken an unfair advantage; he has struck with an unfamiliar weapon; he* has executed a new and disquieting stratagem. We did not know that he had so ghastly resources, possibilities of terror so dismal.

Thurston's body lay on its back. One leg, bent beneath, was broken above the knee and the bone driven into the earth. The abdomen had burst; the bowels protruded. The neck was broken.

The arms were folded tightly across the breast.





T

THE MOCKING-BIRD

he time, a pleasant Sunday afternoon in the early autumn of 1861. The place, a forest's heart in the mountain region of southwestern Virginia. Private Grayrock of the Federal Army is discovered seated comfortably at the root

The Mocking-Bird

of a great pine tree, against which he leans, his legs extended straight along the ground, his rifle lying across his thighs, his hands (clasped in order that they may not fall away to his sides) resting upon the barrel of the weapon. The contact of the back of his head with the tree has pushed his cap downward over his eyes, almost concealing them; one seeing him would say that he slept.

Private Grayrock did not sleep; to have done so would have imperiled the interests of the United States, for he was a long way outside the lines and subject to capture or death at the hands of the enemy. Moreover, he was in a frame of mind unfavorable to repose. The cause of his perturbation of spirit was this: during the previous night he had served on the picket-guard, and been posted as a sentinel in this very forest. The night was clear, though moonless, but in the gloom of the wood the darkness was deep. Grayrock's post was at a considerable distance from those to right and left, for the pickets had been thrown out a needless distance from the camp, making the line too long for the force detailed to occupy it. The war was young, and military camps entertained the error that while sleeping they were better protected by thin lines a long way out toward the enemy than by thicker ones close in. And surely they needed as long notice as possible of an enemy's approach, for they were at that time addicted to the practice of undressing—than which nothing could be more unsoldierly. On the morning of the memorable

6th April, at Shiloh,* many of Grant's men when spitted on Confederate bayonets were as naked as civilians; but it should be allowed that this was not because of any defect in their picket line. Their error was of another sort: they had no pickets. This is perhaps a vain digression. I should not care to undertake to interest the reader in the fate of an army; what we have here to consider is that of Private Grayrock.

For two hours after he had been left at his lonely post that Saturday night he stood stock-still, leaning against the trunk of a large tree, staring into the darkness in his front and trying to recognize known objects; for he had been posted at the same spot during the day. But all was now different; he saw nothing in detail, but only groups of things, whose shapes, not observed when there was something more of them to observe, were now unfamiliar. They seemed not to have been there before. A landscape that is all trees and undergrowth, moreover, lacks definition, is confused and without accentuated points upon which attention can gain a foothold. Add the gloom of a moonless night, and something more than great natural intelligence and a city education is required to preserve one's knowledge of direction. And that is how it occurred that Private Grayrock, after vigilantly watching the spaces in his front and then imprudently executing a circumspection of his whole dimly visible environment (silently walking around his tree to accomplish it) lost his bearings

and seriously impaired his usefulness as a sentinel. Lost at his post—unable to say in which direction to look for an enemy's approach, and in which lay the sleeping camp for whose security he was accountable with his life—conscious, too, of many another awkward feature of the situation and of considerations affecting his own safety, Private Grayrock was profoundly disquieted. Nor was he given time to recover his tranquillity, for almost at the moment that he realized his awkward predicament he heard a stir of leaves and a snap of fallen twigs, and turning with a stilled heart in the direction whence it came, saw in the gloom the indistinct outlines of a human figure.

“Halt!” shouted Private Grayrock, peremptorily as in duty bound, backing up the command with the sharp metallic snap of his cocking rifle—“who goes there?”

There was no answer; at least there was an instant's hesitation, and the answer, if it came, was lost in the report of the sentinel's rifle. In the silence of the night and the forest the sound was deafening, and hardly had it died away when it was repeated by the pieces of the pickets to right and left, a sympathetic fusillade. For two hours every unconverted civilian of them had been evolving enemies from his imagination, and peopling the woods in his front with them, and Grayrock's shot had started the whole encroaching host into visible existence. Having fired, all retreated, breathless, to the reserves—all but

Grayrock, who did not know in what direction to retreat. When, no enemy appearing, the roused camp two miles away had undressed and got itself into bed again, and the picket line was cautiously re-established, he was discovered bravely holding his ground, and was complimented by the officer of the guard as the one soldier of that devoted band who could rightly be considered the moral equivalent of that uncommon unit of value, "a whoop in hell."

In the mean time, however, Grayrock had made a close but unavailing search for the mortal part of the intruder at whom he had fired, and whom he had a marksman's intuitive sense of having hit; for he was one of those born experts who shoot without aim by an instinctive sense of direction, and are nearly as dangerous by night as by day. During a full half of his twenty-four years he had been a terror to the targets* of all the shooting-galleries in three cities. Unable now to produce his dead game he had the discretion to hold his tongue, and was glad to observe in his officer and comrades the natural assumption that not having run away he had seen nothing hostile. His "honorable mention" had been earned by not running away anyhow.

Nevertheless, Private Grayrock was far from satisfied with the night's adventure, and when the next day he made some fair enough pretext to apply for a pass to go outside the lines, and the general commanding promptly granted it in recognition of his bravery the night before, he passed out at the point

The Mocking-Bird

where that had been displayed. Telling the sentinel then on duty there that he had lost something,—which was true enough—he renewed the search for the person whom he supposed himself to have shot, and whom if only wounded he hoped to trail by the blood. He was no more successful by daylight than he had been in the darkness, and after covering a wide area and boldly penetrating a long distance into “the Confederacy” he gave up the search, somewhat fatigued, seated himself at the root of the great pine tree, where we have seen him, and indulged his disappointment.

It is not to be inferred that Grayrock’s was the chagrin of a cruel nature balked of its bloody deed. In the clear large eyes, finely wrought lips, and broad forehead of that young man one could read quite another story, and in point of fact his character was a singularly felicitous compound of boldness and sensibility, courage and conscience.

“I find myself disappointed,” he said to himself, sitting there at the bottom of the golden haze submerging the forest like a subtler sea—“disappointed in failing to discover a fellow-man dead by my hand! Do I then really wish that I had taken life in the performance of a duty as well performed without? What more could I wish? If any danger threatened, my shot averted it; that is what I was there to do. No, I am glad indeed if no human life was needlessly extinguished by me. But I am in a false position. I have suffered myself to be complim-

ented by my officers and envied by my comrades. The camp is ringing with praise of my courage. That is not just; I know myself courageous, but this praise is for specific acts which I did not perform, or performed —otherwise. It is believed that I remained at my post bravely, without firing, whereas it was I who began the fusillade, and I did not retreat in the general alarm because bewildered. What, then, shall I do? Explain that I saw an enemy and fired? They have all said that of themselves, yet none believes it. Shall I tell a truth which, discrediting my courage, will have the effect of a lie? Ugh! it is an ugly business altogether. I wish to God I could find my man!"

And so wishing, Private Grayrock, overcome at last by the languor of the afternoon and lulled by the stilly sounds of insects droning and prosing in certain fragrant shrubs, so far forgot the interests of the United States as to fall asleep and expose himself to capture. And sleeping he dreamed.

He thought himself a boy, living in a far, fair land by the border of a great river upon which the tall steamboats moved grandly up and down beneath their towering evolutions of black smoke, which announced them along before they had rounded the bends and marked their movements when miles out of sight. With him always, at his side as he watched them, was one to whom he gave his heart and soul in love—a twin brother. Together they strolled along the banks of the stream; together explored the fields lying farther away from it, and gathered pungent

The Mocking-Bird

mints and sticks of fragrant sassafras in the hills overlooking all—beyond which lay the Realm of Conjecture, and from which, looking southward across the great river, they caught glimpses of the Enchanted Land. Hand in hand and heart in heart they two, the only children of a widowed mother, walked in paths of light through valleys of peace, seeing new things under a new sun. And through all the golden days floated one unceasing sound—the rich, thrilling melody of a mocking-bird in a cage by the cottage door. It pervaded and possessed all the spiritual intervals of the dream, like a musical benediction. The joyous bird was always in song; its infinitely various notes seemed to flow from its throat, effortless, in bubbles and rills* at each heartbeat, like the waters of a pulsing spring. That fresh, clear melody seemed, indeed, the spirit of the scene, the meaning and interpretation to sense of the mysteries of life and love.

But there came a time when the days of the dream grew dark with sorrow in a rain of tears. The good mother was dead, the meadowside home by the great river was broken up, and the brothers were parted between two of their kinsmen. William (the dreamer) went to live in a populous city in the Realm of Conjecture, and John, crossing the river into the Enchanted Lands, was taken to a distant region whose people in their lives and ways were said to be strange and wicked. To him, in the distribution of the dead mother's estate, had fallen all that they deemed

of value—the mocking-bird. They could be divided, but it could not, so it was carried away into the strange country, and the world of William knew it no more forever. Yet still through the aftertime of his loneliness its song filled all the dream, and seemed always sounding in his ear and in his heart.

The kinsmen who had adopted the boys were enemies, holding no communication. For a time letters full of boyish bravado and boastful narratives of the new and larger experience—grotesque descriptions of their widening lives and the new worlds they had conquered—passed between them; but these gradually became less frequent, and with William's removal to another and greater city ceased altogether. But ever through it all ran the song of the mocking-bird, and when the dreamer opened his eyes and stared through the vistas of the pine forest the cessation of its music first apprised him that he was awake.

The sun was low and red in the west; the level rays projected from the trunk of each giant pine a wall of shadow traversing the golden haze to eastward until light and shade were blended in undistinguishable blue.

Private Grayrock rose to his feet, looked cautiously about him, shouldered his rifle and set off toward camp. He had gone perhaps a half-mile, and was passing a thicket of laurel, when a bird rose from the midst of it and perching on the branch of a tree above, pured from its joyous breast so inexhaustible

The Mocking-Bird

floods of song as but one of all God's creatures can utter in His praise. There was little in that—it was only to open the bill and breathe; yet the man stopped as it struck—stopped and let fall his rifle, looked upward at the bird, covered his eyes with his hands and wept like a child! For the moment he was, indeed, a child, in spirit and in memory, dwelling again by the great river, over-against the Enchanted Land!* Then with an effort of the will he pulled himself together, picked up his weapon and audibly damning himself for an idiot strode on. Passing an opening that reached into the heart of the little thicket he looked in, and there, supine upon the earth, its arms all abroad, its gray uniform stained with a single spot of blood upon the breast, its white face turned sharply upward and backward, lay the image of himself!—the body of John Grayrock, dead of a gunshot wound, and still warm! He had found his man.

As the unfortunate soldier knelt beside that masterwork of civil war the shrilling bird upon the bough overhead stilled her song and, flushed with sunset's crimson glory, glided silently away through the solemn spaces of the wood. At roll-call that evening in the Federal camp the name William Grayrock brought no response, nor ever again thereafter.

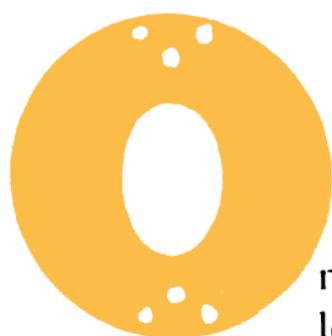




A RESUMED IDENTITY

I

The Review as a Form of Welcome



ne summer night a man stood on a low hill overlooking a wide expanse of forest and field. By the full moon hanging low in the west he knew what he might not have known otherwise: that it was near the hour of dawn.

A Resumed Identity

A light mist lay along the earth, partly veiling the lower features of the landscape, but above it the taller trees showed in well-defined masses against a clear sky. Two or three farmhouses were visible through the haze, but in none of them, naturally, was a light. Nowhere, indeed, was any sign or suggestion of life except the barking of a distant dog, which, repeated with mechanical iteration, served rather to accentuate than dispel the loneliness of the scene.

The man looked curiously about him on all sides, as one who among familiar surroundings is unable to determine his exact place and part in the scheme of things. It is so, perhaps that we shall act when, risen from the dead, we await the call to judgment.*

A hundred yards away was a straight road, showing white in the moonlight. Endeavoring to orient himself, as a surveyor or navigator might say, the man moved his eyes slowly along its visible length and at a distance of a quarter-mile to the south of his station saw, dim and gray in the haze, a group of horsemen riding to the north. Behind them were men afoot, marching in column, with dimly gleaming rifles aslant above their shoulders. They moved slowly and in silence. Another group of horsemen, another regiment of infantry, another and another—all in unceasing motion toward the man's point of view, past it, and beyond. A battery of artillery followed, the cannoneers riding with folded arms on limber and caisson. And still the interminable procession came out of the obscurity to south and passed into the

obscurity to north, with never a sound of voice, nor hoof, nor wheel.

The man could not rightly understand: he thought himself deaf; said so, and heard his own voice, although it had an unfamiliar quality that almost alarmed him; it disappointed his ear's expectancy in the matter of timbre and resonance. But he was not deaf, and that for the moment sufficed.

Then he remembered that there are natural phenomena to which someone has given the name "acoustic shadows." If you stand in an acoustic shadow there is one direction from which you will hear nothing. At the battle of Gaines's Mill,* one of the fiercest conflicts of the Civil War, with a hundred guns in play, spectators a mile and a half away on the opposite side of the Chickahominy Valley heard nothing of what they clearly saw. The bombardment of Port Royal, heard and felt at St. Augustine, a hundred and fifty miles to the south, was inaudible two miles to the north in a still atmosphere. A few days before the surrender at Appomattox* a thunderous engagement between the commands of Sheridan and Pickett* was unknown to the latter commander, a mile in the rear of his own line.

These instances were not known to the man of whom we write, but less striking ones of the same character had not escaped his observation. He was profoundly disquieted, but for another reason than the uncanny silence of that moonlight march.

"Good Lord!" he said to himself—and again it

was as if another had spoken his thought—"if those people are what I take them to be we have lost the battle and they are moving on Nashville!"

Then came a thought of self—an apprehension—a strong sense of personal peril, such as in another we call fear. He stepped quickly into the shadow of a tree. And still the silent battalions moved slowly forward in the haze.

The chill of a sudden breeze upon the back of his neck drew his attention to the quarter whence it came, and turning to the east he saw a faint gray light along the horizon—the first sign of returning day. This increased his apprehension.

"I must get away from here," he thought, "or I shall be discovered and taken."

He moved out of the shadow, walking rapidly toward the graying east. From the safer seclusion of a clump of cedars he looked back. The entire column had passed out of sight: the straight white road lay bare and desolate in the moonlight!

Puzzled before, he was now inexpressibly astonished. So swift a passing of so slow an army!—he could not comprehend it. Minute after minute passed unnoted; he had lost his sense of time. He sought with a terrible earnestness a solution of the mystery, but sought in vain. When at last he roused himself from his abstraction the sun's rim was visible above the hills, but in the new conditions he found no other light than that of day; his understanding was involved as darkly in doubt as before.

On every side lay cultivated fields showing no sign of war and war's ravages. From the chimneys of the farmhouses thin ascensions of blue smoke signaled preparations for a day's peaceful toil. Having stilled its immemorial allocution to the moon, the watchdog was assisting a Negro who, prefixing a team of mules to the plow, was flatting and sharpening contentedly at his task. The hero of this tale stared stupidly at the pastoral picture as if he had never seen such a thing in all his life; then he put his hand to his head, passed it through his hair and, withdrawing it, attentively considered the palm a singular thing to do. Apparently reassured by the act, he walked confidently toward the road.

II

When you have Lost your Life Consult a Physician

Dr. Stilling Malson, of Murfreesboro, having visited a patient six or seven miles away, on the Nashville road, had remained with him all night. At daybreak he set out for home on horseback, as was the custom of doctors of the time and region. He had passed into the neighborhood of Stone's River battle-field* when a man approached him from the roadside and saluted in the military fashion, with a movement of the right hand to the hatbrim. But the hat was not a military hat, the man was not in uniform and had not a martial bearing. The doctor nodded

civilly, half thinking that the stranger's uncommon greeting was perhaps in deference to the historic surroundings. As the stranger evidently desired speech with him, he courteously reined in his horse and waited.

"Sir," said the stranger, "although a civilian, you are perhaps an enemy."

"I am a physician," was the noncommittal reply.

"Thank you," said the other. "I am a lieutenant, of the staff of General Hazen."* He paused a moment and looked sharply at the person whom he was addressing, then added, "Of the Federal army."

The physician merely nodded.

"Kindly tell me," continued the other, "what has happened here. Where are the armies? Which has won the battle?"

The physician regarded his questioner curiously with half-shut eyes. After a professional scrutiny, prolonged to the limit of politeness, "Pardon me," he said. "One asking information should be willing to impart it. Are you wounded?" he added, smiling.

"Not seriously—it seems."

The man removed the unmilitary hat, put his hand to his head, passed it through his hair and, withdrawing it, attentively considered the palm.

"I was struck by a bullet and have been unconscious. It must have been a light, glancing blow. I find no blood and feel no pain. I will not trouble you for treatment, but will you kindly direct me to my command—to any part of the Federal army—if you know?"

Again the doctor did not immediately reply: he was recalling much that is recorded in the books of his profession—something about lost identity and the effect of familiar scenes in restoring it. At length he looked the man in the face, smiled, and said:

“Lieutenant, you are not wearing the uniform of your rank and service.”

At this the man glanced down at his civilian attire, lifted his eyes, and said with hesitation:

“That is true. I—I don’t quite understand.”

Still regarding him sharply but not unsympathetically the man of science bluntly inquired:

“How old are you?”

“Twenty-three—if that has anything to do with it.”

“You don’t look it. I should hardly have guessed you to be just that.”

The man was growing impatient. “We need not discuss that,” he said. “I want to know about the army. Not two hours ago I saw a column of troops moving northward on this road. You must have met them. Be good enough to tell me the color of their clothing, which I was unable to make out, and I’ll trouble you no more.”

“You are quite sure that you saw them?”

“Sure? My God, sir, I could have counted them!”

“Why, really,” said the physician, with an amusing consciousness of his own resemblance to the loquacious barber of the *Arabian Nights*,* “this is very interesting. I met no troops.”

The man looked at him coldly, as if he had himself

A Resumed Identity

observed the likeness to the barber. "It is plain," he said, "that you do not care to assist me. Sir, you may go to the devil!"

He turned and strode away, very much at random, across the dewy fields, his half-penitent tormentor quietly watching him from his point of vantage in the saddle till he disappeared beyond an array of trees.

III

The Danger of Looking into a Pool of Water

After leaving the road the man slackened his pace, and now went forward, rather deviously, with a distinct feeling of fatigue. He could not account for this, though truly the interminable loquacity of that country doctor offered itself in explanation. Seating himself upon a rock, he laid one hand upon his knee, back upward, and casually looked at it. It was lean and withered. He lifted both hands to his face. It was seamed and furrowed; he could trace the lines with the tips of his fingers. How strange! A mere bullet stroke and a brief unconsciousness should not make one a physical wreck.

"I must have been a long time in hospital," he said aloud. "Why, what a fool I am! The battle was in December, and it is now summer!" He laughed. "No wonder that fellow thought me an escaped lunatic. He was wrong. I am only an escaped patient."

At a little distance a small plot of ground enclosed

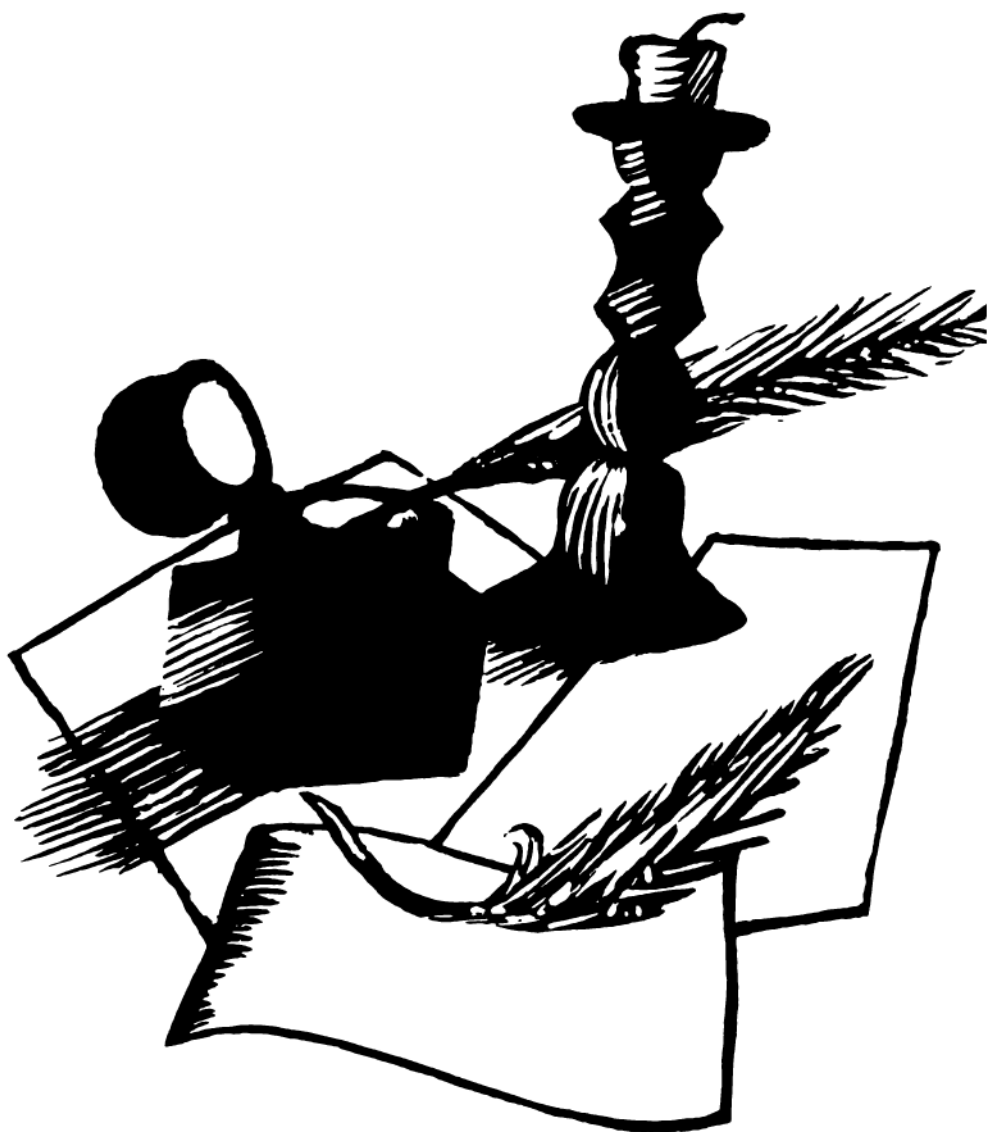
Ambrose BIERCE

by a stone wall caught his attention. With no very definite intent he rose and went to it. In the center was a square, solid monument of hewn stone. It was brown with age, weather-worn at the angles, spotted with moss and lichen. Between the massive blocks were strips of grass the leverage of whose roots had pushed them apart. In answer to the challenge of this ambitious structure Time had laid his destroying hand upon it, and it would soon be "one with Nineveh and Tyre."* In an inscription on one side his eye caught a familiar name. Shaking with excitement, he craned his body across the wall and read:

HAZEN'S BRIGADE
to
The Memory of Its Soldiers
who fell at
Stone River, Dec. 31, 1862.

The man fell back from the wall, faint and sick. Almost within an arm's length was a little depression in the earth; it had been filled by a recent rain—a pool of clear water. He crept to it to revive himself, lifted the upper part of his body on his trembling arms, thrust forward his head and saw the reflection of his face, as in a mirror. He uttered a terrible cry. His arms gave way; he fell, face downward, into the pool and yielded up the life that had spanned another life.





**JUPITER DOKE,
BRIGADIER-GENERAL**

From the Secretary of War to the
Hon.* Jupiter Doke, Hardpan
Crossroads, Posey County, Illinois.

Washington, Nov. 3, 1861.

Having faith in your patriotism and ability, the

President has been pleased to appoint you a brigadier-general of volunteers. Do you accept?

From the Hon. Jupiter Doke to the Secretary of War.

Hardpan, Illinois, Nov. 9, 1861.

It is the proudest moment of my life. The office is one which should be neither sought nor declined. In times that try men's souls the patriot knows no North, no South, no East, no West. His motto should be: "My country, my whole country and nothing but my country."* I accept the great trust confided in me by a free and intelligent people, and with a firm reliance on the principles of constitutional liberty, and invoking the guidance of an all-wise Providence, Ruler of Nations, shall labor so to discharge it as to leave no blot upon my political escutcheon. Say to his Excellency, the successor of the immortal Washington in the Seat of Power, that the patronage of my office will be bestowed with an eye single to securing the greatest good to the greatest number, the stability of republican institutions and the triumph of the party in all elections; and to this I pledge my life, my fortune and my sacred honor. I shall at once prepare an appropriate response to the speech of the chairman of the committee deputed to inform me of my appointment, and I trust the sentiments therein expressed will strike a sympathetic chord in the public heart, as well as command the Executive approval.

Jupiter Doke, Brigadier-General

From the Secretary of War to Major-General Blount Wardorg, Commanding the Military Department of Eastern Kentucky.

Washington, November 14, 1861.

I have assigned to your department Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke, who will soon proceed to Distilleryville, on the Little Buttermilk River, and take command of the Illinois Brigade at that point, reporting to you by letter for orders. Is the route from Covington by way of Bluegrass, Opossum Corners and Horsecave still infested with bushwackers, as reported in your last dispatch? I have a plan for cleaning them out.

From Major-General Blount Wardorg to the Secretary of War.

Lousville, Kentucky,
November 20, 1861.

The name and services of Brigadier-General Docke are unfamiliar to me, but I shall be pleased to have the advantage of his skill. The route from Covington to Distilleryville *via* Opossum Corners and Horsecave I have been compelled to abandon to the enemy, whose guerilla warfare made it impossible to keep it open without detaching too many troops from the front. The brigade at Distilleryville is supplied by steamboats up the Little Buttermilk.

Ambrose BIERCE

From the Secretary of War to Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke, Hardpan, Illinois.

Washington, November 26, 1861.

I deeply regret that your commission had been forwarded by mail before the receipt of your letter of acceptance; so we must dispense with the formality of official notification to you by a committee. The President is highly gratified by the noble and patriotic sentiments of your letter, and directs that you proceed at once to your command at Distilleryville, Kentucky, and there report by letter to Major-General Wardorg at Louisville, for orders. It is important that the strictest secrecy be observed regarding your movements until you have passed Covington, as it is desired to hold the enemy in front of Distilleryville until you are within three days of him. Then if your approach is known it will operate as a demonstration against his right and cause him to strengthen it with his left now at Memphis, Tennessee, which it is desirable to capture first. Go by way of Bluegrass, Opossum Corners and Horsecave. All officers are expected to be in full uniform when en route to the front.

From Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke to the Secretary of War.

Covington, Kentucky.

December 7, 1861.

I arrived yesterday at this point, and have given my proxy to Joel Briller, Esq.,* my wife's cousin, and a

Jupiter Doke, Brigadier-General

staunch Republican, who will worthily represent Posey County in field and forum. He points with pride to a stainless record in the halls of legislation, which have often echoed to his soul-stirring eloquence on questions which lie at the very foundation of popular government. He has been called the Patrick Henry* of Hardpan, where he has done yeoman's service in the cause of civil and religious liberty. Mr. Briller left for Distilleryville last evening, and the standard bearer of the Democratic host confronting that stronghold of freedom will find him a lion in his path. I have been asked to remain here and deliver some addresses to the people in a local contest involving issues of paramount importance. That duty being performed, I shall in person enter the arena of armed debate and move in the direction of the heaviest firing, burning my ships behind me. I forward by this mail to his Excellency the President a request for the appointment of my son, Jabez Leonidas Doke, as postmaster at Hardpan. I would take it, sir, as a great favor if you would give the application a strong oral indorsement, as the appointment is in the line of reform. Be kind enough to inform me what are the emoluments of the office-I hold in the military arm, and if they are by salary or fees. My mileage account* will be transmitted monthly.

Ambrose BIERCE

From Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke to Major-General Blount Wardorg.

Distilleryville, Kentucky.

January 12, 1862.

I arrived on the tented field* yesterday by steamboat, the recent storms having inundated the landscape, covering, I understand, the greater part of a congressional district. I am pained to find that Joel Briller, Esq., a prominent citizen of Posey County, Illinois, and a far-seeing statesman who held my proxy, and who a month ago should have been thundering at the gates of Disunion, has not been heard from, and has doubtless been sacrificed upon the altar of his country. In him the American people lose a bulwark of freedom. I would respectfully move that you designate a committee to draw up resolutions of respect to his memory, and that the office holders and men under your command wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days. I shall at once place myself at the head of affairs here, and am now ready to entertain any suggestions which you may make, looking to the better enforcement of the laws in this commonwealth. The militant Democrats on the other side of the river appear to be contemplating extreme measures. They have two large cannons facing this way, and yesterday morning, I am told, some of them came down to the water's edge and remained in session for some time, making infamous allegations.

Jupiter Doke, Brigadier-General

From the Diary of Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke, at Distilleryville, Kentucky.

January 12, 1862—On my arrival yesterday at the Henry Clay Hotel (named in honor of the late far-seeing statesman)* I was waited on by a delegation consisting of the three colonels intrusted with the command of the regiments of my brigade. It was an occasion that will be memorable in the political annals of America. Forwarded copies of the speeches to the Posey *Maverick*,* to be spread upon the record of the ages. The gentlemen composing the delegation unanimously reaffirmed their devotion to the principles of national unity and the Republican party. Was gratified to recognize in them men of political prominence and untarnished escutcheons. At the subsequent banquet, sentiments of lofty patriotism were expressed. Wrote to Mr. Wardorg at Louisville for instructions.

January 13, 1862—Leased a prominent residence (the former incumbent being absent in arms against his country) for the term of one year, and wrote at once for Mrs. Brigadier-General Doke and the vital issues*—excepting Jabez Leonidas. In the camp of treason opposite here there are supposed to be three thousand misguided men laying the ax at the root of the tree of liberty. They have a clear majority, many of our men having returned without leave to their constituents. We could probably not poll more than

two thousand votes. Have advised my heads of regiments to make a canvass of those remaining, all bolters to be read out of the phalanx.

January 14, 1862—Wrote to the President, asking for the contract to supply this command with firearms and regalia through my brother-in-law, prominently identified with the manufacturing interests of the country. Club of cannon soldiers arrived at Jayhawk, three miles back from here, on their way to join us in battle array. Marched my whole brigade to Jayhawk to escort them into town, but their chairman, mistaking us for the opposing party, opened fire on the head of the procession and by the extraordinary noise of the cannon balls (I had no conception of it!) so frightened my horse that I was unseated without a contest. The meeting adjourned in disorder and returning to camp I found that a deputation of the enemy had crossed the river in our absence and made a division of the loaves and fishes.* Wrote to the President, applying for the Gubernatorial Chair of the Territory of Idaho.*

From Editorial Article in the Posey, Illinois, "Maverick."

January 20, 1862.

Brigadier-General Doke's thrilling account, in another column, of the Battle of Distilleryville will make the heart of every loyal Illinoisian leap with exultation. The brilliant exploit marks an era in

Jupiter Doke, Brigadier-General

military history, and as General Doke says, “lays broad and deep the foundations of American prowess in arms.” As none of the troops engaged, except the gallant author-chieftain (a host in himself) hails from Posey County, he justly considered that a list of the fallen would only occupy our valuable space to the exclusion of more important matter, but his account of the strategic ruse by which he apparently abandoned his camp and so inveigled a perfidious enemy into it for the purpose of murdering the sick, the unfortunate *countertempus** at Jayhawk, the subsequent dash upon a trapped enemy flushed with a supposed success, driving their terrified legions across an impassable river which precluded pursuit—all these “moving accidents by flood and field”* are related with a pen of fire and have all the terrible interest of romance.

Verily, truth is stranger than fiction and the pen is mightier than the sword. When by the graphic power of the art preservative of all arts we are brought face to face with such glorious events as these, the *Maverick*’s enterprise in securing for its thousands of readers the services of so distinguished a contributor as the Great Captain who made the history as well as wrote it seems a matter of almost secondary importance. For President in 1864 (subject to the decision of the Republican National Convention) Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke, of Illinois!

From Major-General Blount Wardorg to Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke.

Louisville, January 22, 1862.

Your letter apprising me of your arrival at Distilleryville was delayed in transmission, having only just been received (open) through the courtesy of the Confederate department commander under a flag of truce. He begs me to assure you that he would consider it an act of cruelty to trouble you, and I think it would be. Maintain, however, a threatening attitude, but at the least pressure retire. Your position is simply an outpost which it is not intended to hold.

From Major-General Blount Wardorg to the Secretary of War.

Louisville, January 23, 1862.

I have certain information that the enemy has concentrated twenty thousand troops of all arms on the Little Buttermilk. According to your assignment, General Doke is in command of the small brigade of raw troops opposing them. It is no part of my plan to contest the enemy's advance at that point, but I cannot hold myself responsible for any reverses to the brigade mentioned, under its present commander. I think him a fool.

From the Secretary of War to Major-General Blount Wardorg.

Washington, February 1, 1862.

The President has great faith in General Doke. If

Jupiter Doke, Brigadier-General

your estimate of him is correct, however, he would seem to be singularly well placed where he now is, as your plans appear to contemplate a considerable sacrifice for whatever advantages you expect to gain.

From Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke to Major-General Blount Wardorg.

Distilleryville, February 1, 1862.

To-morrow I shall remove my headquarters to Jayhawk in order to point the way whenever my brigade retires from Distilleryville, as forshadowed by your letter of the 22d ult.* I have appointed a Committee on Retreat, the minutes of whose first meeting I transmit to you. You will perceive that the committee having been duly organized by the election of a chairman and secretary, a resolution (prepared by myself) was adopted, to the effect that in case treason again raises her hideous head on this side of the river every man of the brigade is to mount a mule, the procession to move promptly to Louisville and the loyal North. In preparation for such an emergency I have for some time been collecting mules from the resident democracy,* and have on hand 2300 in a field at Jayhawk. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty!

From Major-General Gideon J. Buxter, C.S.A., to the Confederate Secretary of War.*

Bung Station, Kentucky.

February 4, 1862.

On the night of the 2d inst., our entire force,

consisting of 25,000 men and thirty-two field pieces, under command of Major General Simmons B. Flood, crossed by a ford to the north side of Little Buttermilk River at a point three miles above Distilleryville and moved obliquely down and away from the stream, to strike the Covington turnpike at Jayhawk; the object being, as you know, to capture Covington, destroy Cincinnati and occupy the Ohio Valley. For some months there had been in our front only a small brigade of undisciplined troops, apparently without a commander, who were useful to us, for by not disturbing them we could create an impression of our weakness. But the movement on Jayhawk having isolated them, I was about to detach an Alabama regiment to bring them in, my division being the leading one, when an earth-shaking rumble was felt and heard, and suddenly the head-of-column was struck by one of the terrible tornadoes for which this region is famous, and utterly annihilated. The Tornado, I believe, passed along the entire length of the road back to the fort, dispersing or destroying our entire army; but of this I cannot be sure, for I was lifted from the earth insensible and blown back to the south side of the river. Continuous firing all night on the north side and the reports of such of our men as have recrossed at the ford convince me that the Yankee brigade has exterminated the disabled survivors. Our loss has been uncommonly heavy. Of my own division of 15,000 infantry, the casualties—killed, wounded, captured, and missing—

Jupiter Doke, Brigadier-General

are 14,994. Of General Dolliver Billow's division, 11,200 strong, I can find but two officers and a cook. Of the artillery, 800 men, none has reported on this side of the river. General Flood is dead. I have assumed command of the expeditionary force, but owing to the heavy losses have deemed it advisable to contract my line of supplies as rapidly as possible. I shall push southward to-morrow morning early. The purposes of the campaign have been as yet but partly accomplished.

From Major-General Dolliver Billows, C.S.A., to the Confederate Secretary of War.

Buhac, Kentucky,
February 5, 1862.

... But during the 2d they had, unknown to us, been reinforced by fifty thousand cavalry, and being apprised of our movement by a spy, this vast body was drawn up in the darkness at Jayhawk, and as the head of our column reached that point at about 11 P.M., fell upon it with astonishing fury, destroying the division of General Buxter in an instant. General Baumschank's brigade of artillery, which was in the rear, may have escaped—I did not wait to see, but withdrew my division to the river at a point several miles above the ford, and at daylight ferried it across on two fence rails lashed together with a suspender. Its losses, from an effective strength of 11,200, are 11,199. General Buxter is dead. I am changing my base to Mobile, Alabama.

Resolutions of Congress, February 15, 1862.

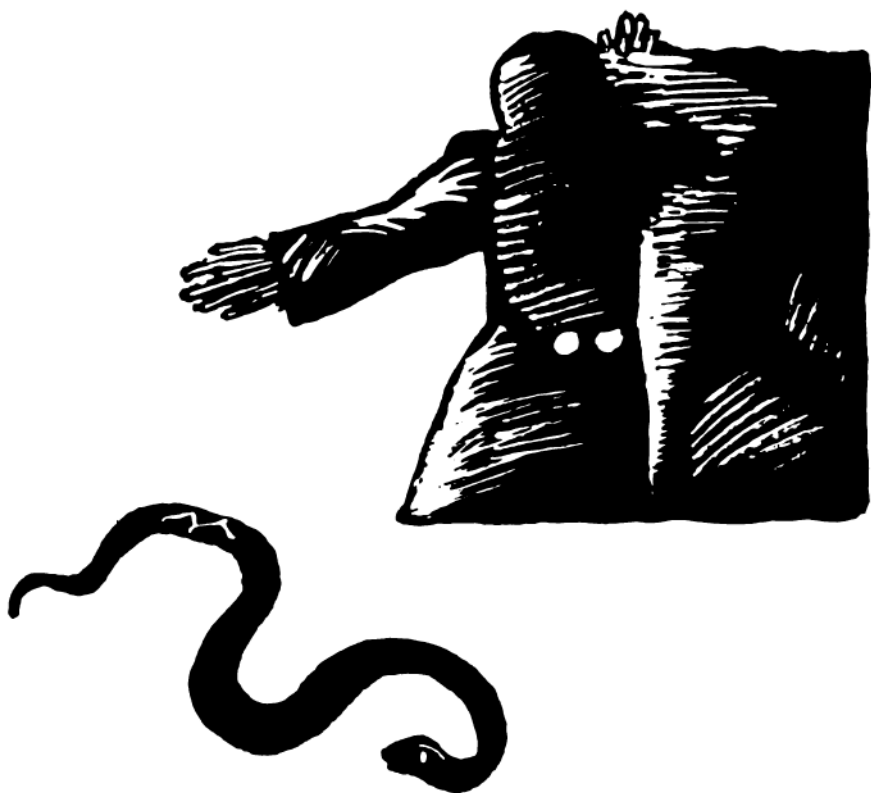
Resolved, That the thanks of Congress are due, and hereby tendered to Brigadier-General Jupiter Doke and the gallant men under his command for their unparalleled feat of attacking—themselves only 2000 strong—an army of 25,000 men and utterly overthrowing it, killing 5327, making prisoners of 19,003, of whom more than half were wounded, taking 32 guns, 20,000 stand of small arms and, in short, the enemy's entire equipment.

Resolved, That for this unexampled victory the President be requested to designate a day of thanksgiving and public celebration of religious rites in the various churches.

Resolved, That he be requested, in further commemoration of the great event, and in reward of the gallant spirits whose deeds have added such imperishable lustre to the American arms, to appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, the following officer:

One major-general.





THE MAN AND THE SNAKE

*It is of veritabyll report, and attested of so many that there be nowe of wyse and learned none to gaynsaye it, that y^e serpente hys eye hath a magnetik propertie that whosoe falleth into its suasion is drawn forwards in despyte of his wille, and perisheth miserabyll by y^e creature hys byte.**

Streched at ease upon a sofa, in gown and slippers, Harker Brayton smiled as he read the foregoing sentence in old Morryster's *Marvells of Science*. "The only marvel in the matter," he said to himself, "is that the wise and learned in

Morryster's day should have believed such nonsense as is rejected by most of even the ignorant in ours."

A train of reflection followed—for Brayton was a man of thought—and he unconsciously lowered his book without altering the direction of his eyes. As soon as the volume had gone below the line of sight, something in an obscure corner of the room recalled his attention to his surroundings. What he saw, in the shadow under his bed, was two small points of light, apparently about an inch apart. They might have been reflections of the gas jet above him, in metal nailheads; he gave them but little thought and resumed his reading. A moment later something—some impulse which it did not occur to him to analyze—impelled him to lower the book again and seek for what he saw before. The points of light were still there. They seemed to have become brighter than before, shining with a greenish luster that he had not at first observed. He thought, too, that they might have moved a trifle—were somewhat nearer. They were still too much in shadow, however, to reveal their nature and origin to an indolent attention, and again he resumed his reading. Suddenly something in the text suggested a thought that made him start and drop the book for the third time to the side of the sofa, whence, escaping from his hand, it fell sprawling to the floor, back upward. Brayton, half-risen, was staring intently into the obscurity beneath the bed, where the points of light shone with, it seemed to him, an added fire. His attention was now fully

aroused, his gaze eager and imperative. It disclosed, almost directly under the foot rail of the bed, the coils of a large serpent—the points of light were its eyes! Its horrible head, thrust flatly forth from the innermost coil and resting upon the outermost, was directed straight toward him, the definition of the wide, brutal jaw and the idiotlike forehead serving to show the direction of its malevolent gaze. The eyes were no longer merely luminous points; they looked into his own with a meaning, a malign significance.

II

A snake in a bedroom of a modern city dwelling of the better sort is, happily, not so common a phenomenon as to make explanation altogether needless. Harker Brayton, a bachelor of thirty-five, a scholar, idler and something of an athlete, rich, popular and of sound health, had returned to San Francisco from all manner of remote and unfamiliar countries. His tastes, always a trifle luxurious, had taken on an added exuberance from long privation; and the resources of even the Castle Hotel being inadequate to their perfect gratification, he had gladly accepted the hospitality of his friend, Dr. Druring, the distinguished scientist. Dr. Druring's house, a large, old-fashioned one in what is now an obscure quarter of the city, had an outer and visible aspect of proud reserve. It plainly would not associate with the contiguous elements of its altered envi-

ronment, and appeared to have developed some of the eccentricities which come of isolation. One of these was a wing, conspicuously irrelevant in point of architecture, and no less rebellious in matter of purpose; for it was a combination of laboratory, menagerie and museum. It was here that the doctor indulged the scientific side of his nature in the study of such forms of animal life as engaged his interest and comforted his taste—which, it must be confessed, ran rather to the lower types. For one of the higher nimbly and sweetly to recommend itself unto his gentle senses it had at least to retain certain rudimentary characteristics allying it to such “dragons of the prime”* as toads and snakes. His scientific sympathies were distinctly reptilian; he loved nature’s vulgarians and described himself as the Zola of zoology.* His wife and daughters not having the advantage to share his enlightened curiosity regarding the works and ways of our ill-starred fellow creatures, were with needless austerity excluded from what he called the Snakery and doomed to companionship with their own kind, though to soften the rigors of their lot he had permitted them out of his great wealth to outdo the reptiles in the gorgeousness of their surroundings and to shine with a superior splendor.

Architecturally and in point of “furnishing” the Snakery had a severe simplicity befitting the humble circumstances of its occupants, many of whom, indeed, could not safely have been entrusted with the

liberty that is necessary to the full enjoyment of luxury, for they had the troublesome peculiarity of being alive. In their own apartments, however, they were under as little personal restraint as was compatible with their protection from the baneful habit of swallowing one another; and, as Brayton had thoughtfully been apprised, it was more than a tradition that some of them had at divers times been found in parts of the premises where it would have embarrassed them to explain their presence. Despite the Snakery and its uncanny associations—to which, indeed, he gave little attention—Brayton found life at the Druring mansion very much to his mind.

III

Beyond a smart shock of surprise and a shudder of mere loathing Mr. Brayton was not greatly affected. His first thought was to ring the call bell and bring a servant, but although the bell cord dangled within easy reach he made no movement toward it; it had occurred to his mind that the act might subject him to the suspicion of fear, which he certainly did not feel. He was more keenly conscious of the incongruous nature of the situation than affected by its perils; it was revolting, but absurd.

The reptile was of a species with which Brayton was unfamiliar. Its length he could only conjecture; the body at the largest visible part seemed about as thick as his forearm. In what way was it dangerous, if in

any way? Was it venomous? Was it a constrictor? His knowledge of nature's danger signals did not enable him to say; he had never deciphered the code.

If not dangerous the creature was at least offensive. It was *de trop*—"matter out of place"—an impertinence. The gem was unworthy of the setting. Even the barbarous taste of our time and country, which had loaded the walls of the room with pictures, the floor with furniture and the furniture with bric-à-brac, had not quite fitted the place for this bit of the savage life of the jungle. Besides—insupportable thought!—the exhalations of its breath mingled with the atmosphere which he himself was breathing.

These thoughts shaped themselves with greater or less definition in Brayton's mind and begot action. The process is what we call consideration and decision. It is thus that we are wise and unwise. It is thus that the withered leaf in an autumn breeze shows greater or less intelligence than its fellows, falling upon the land or upon the lake. The secret of human action is an open one: something contracts our muscles. Does it matter if we give to the preparatory molecular changes the name of will?

Brayton rose to his feet and prepared to back softly away from the snake, without disturbing it if possible, and through the door. Men retire so from the presence of the great, for greatness is power and power is a menace. He knew that he could walk backward without error. Should the monster follow, the taste which had plastered the walls with paintings had con-

The Man and the Snake

sistently supplied a rack of murderous Oriental weapons from which he could snatch one to suit the occasion. In the meantime the snake's eyes burned with a more pitiless malevolence than before.

Brayton lifted his right foot free of the floor to step backward. That moment he felt a strong aversion to doing so.

"I am accounted brave," he thought. "Is bravery, then, no more than pride? Because there are none to witness the shame shall I retreat?"

He was steadying himself with his right hand upon the back of a chair, his foot suspended.

"Nonsense!" he said aloud. "I am not so great a coward as to fear to seem to myself afraid."

He lifted the foot a little higher by slightly bending the knee and thrust it sharply to the floor—an inch in front of the other! He could not think how that occurred. A trial with the left foot had the same result; it was again in advance of the right. The hand upon the chair back was grasping it; the arm was straight, reaching somewhat backward. One might have said that he was reluctant to lose his hold. The snake's malignant head was still thrust forth from the inner coil as before, the neck level. It had not moved, but its eyes were now electric sparks, radiating an infinity of luminous needles.

The man had an ashy pallor. Again he took a step forward, and another, partly dragging the chair, which when finally released fell upon the floor with a crash. The man groaned; the snake made neither

sound nor motion, but its eyes were two dazzling suns. The reptile itself was wholly concealed by them. They gave off enlarging rings of rich and vivid colors, which at their greatest expansion successively vanished like soap bubbles; they seemed to approach his very face, and anon were an immeasurable distance away. He heard, somewhere, the continuous throbbing of a great drum, with desultory bursts of far music, inconceivably sweet, like the tones of an aeolian harp. He knew it for the sunrise melody of Memnon's statue,* and thought he stood in the Nile-side* reeds hearing with exalted sense that immortal anthem through the silence of the centuries.

The music ceased; rather, it became by insensible degrees the distant roll of a retreating thunderstorm. A landscape, glittering with sun and rain, stretched before him, arched with a vivid rainbow framing in its giant curve a hundred visible cities. In the middle distance a vast serpent, wearing a crown, reared its head out of its voluminous convolutions and looked at him with his dead mother's eyes. Suddenly this enchanting landscape seemed to rise swiftly upward like the drop scene at a theater, and vanished in a blank. Something struck him a hard blow upon the face and breast. He had fallen to the floor; the blood ran from his broken nose and his bruised lips. For a time he was dazed and stunned, and lay with closed eyes, his face against the floor. In a few moments he had recovered, and then knew that this fall, by withdrawing his eyes, had broken the spell that held him.

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He felt that now, by keeping his gaze averted, he would be able to retreat. But the thought of the serpent within a few feet of his head, yet unseen—perhaps in the very act of springing upon him and throwing its coils about his throat—was too horrible! He lifted his head, stared again into those baleful eyes, and was again in bondage.

The snake had not moved and appeared somewhat to have lost its power upon the imagination; the gorgeous illusions of a few moments before were not repeated. Beneath that flat and brainless brow its black, beady eyes simply glittered as at first with an expression unspeakably malignant. It was as if the creature, assured of its triumph, had determined to practice no more alluring wiles.

Now ensued a fearful scene. The man, prone upon the floor, within a yard of his enemy, raised the upper part of his body upon his elbows, his head thrown back, his legs extended to their full length. His face white between its stains of blood; his eyes were strained open to their uttermost expansion. There was froth upon his lips; it dropped off in flakes. Strong convulsions ran through his body, making almost serpentine undulations. He bent himself at the waist, shifting his legs from side to side. And every movement left him a little nearer to the snake. He thrust his hands forward to brace himself back, yet constantly advanced upon his elbows.

IV

Dr. Druring and his wife sat in the library. The scientist was in rare good humor.

"I have just obtained by exchange with another collector," he said, "a splendid specimen of the *ophiophagus*."

"And what may that be?" the lady inquired with a somewhat languid interest.

"Why, bless my soul, what profound ignorance! My dear, a man who ascertains after marriage that his wife does not know Greek is entitled to a divorce. The *ophiophagus* is a snake that eats other snakes."

"I hope it will eat all yours," she said, absently shifting the lamp. "But how does it get the other snakes? By charming them, I suppose."

"That is just like you, dear," said the doctor, with an affectation of petulance. "You know how irritating to me is any allusion to that vulgar superstition about a snake's power of fascination."

The conversation was interrupted by a mighty cry, which rang through the silent house like the voice of a demon shouting in a tomb! Again and yet again it sounded, with terrible distinctness. They sprang to their feet, the man confused, the lady pale and speechless with fright. Almost before the echoes of the last cry had died away the doctor was out of the room, springing up the stairs two steps at a time. In the corridor in front of Brayton's chamber he met some servants who had come from the upper floor.

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Together they rushed at the door without knocking. It was unfastened and gave way. Brayton lay upon his stomach on the floor, dead. His head and arms were partly concealed under the foot rail of the bed. They pulled the body away, turning it upon the back. The face was daubed with blood and froth, the eyes were wide open, staring—a dreadful sight!

“Died in a fit,” said the scientist, bending his knee and placing his hand upon the heart. While in that position, he chanced to look under the bed. “Good God!” he added, “how did this thing get in here?”

He reached under the bed, pulled out the snake and flung it, still coiled, to the center of the room, whence with a harsh, shuffling sound it slid across the polished floor till stopped by the wall, where it lay without motion. It was a stuffed snake; its eyes were two shoe buttons.



THE DEATH OF HALPIN FRAYSER



For by death is wrought greater change than hath been shown. Whereas in general the spirit that removed cometh back upon occasion, and is sometimes seen of those in flesh (appearing in the form of the body it bore), yet it hath happened that the veritable body without the spirit hath walked. And

it is attested of those encountering who have lived to speak thereon that a lich so raised up hath no natural affection, nor remembrance thereof, but only hate. Also, it is known that some spirits which in life were benign become by death evil altogether.—* Hali**

I

On one dark night in midsummer a man waking from a dreamless sleep in a forest lifted his head from the earth, and staring a few moments into the blackness, said: "Catherine Larue." He said nothing more; no reason

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was known to him why he should have said so much.

The man was Halpin Frayser. He lived in St. Helena, but where he lives now is uncertain, for he is dead. One who practices sleeping in the woods with nothing under him but the dry leaves and the damp earth, and nothing over him but the branches from which the leaves have fallen and the sky from which the earth has fallen, cannot hope for great longevity, and Frayser had already attained the age of thirty-two. There are persons in this world, millions of persons, and far and away the best persons, who regard that as a very advanced age. They are the children. To those who view the voyage of life from the port of departure the bark that has accomplished any considerable distance appears already in close approach to the farther shore. However, it is not certain that Halpin Frayser came to his death by exposure.*

He had been all day in the hills west of the Napa Valley, looking for doves and such small game as was in season. Late in the afternoon it had come on to be cloudy, and he had lost his bearings; and although he had only to go always downhill—everywhere the way to safety when one is lost—the absence of trails had so impeded him that he was overtaken by night while still in the forest. Unable in the darkness to penetrate the thickets of manzanita* and other undergrowth, utterly bewildered and overcome with fatigue, he had lain down near the root of a large madroño and fallen into a dreamless sleep. It was hours later, in the very

middle of the night, that one of God's mysterious messengers, gliding ahead of the incalculable host of his companions sweeping westward with the dawn line, pronounced the awakening word in the ear of the sleeper, who sat upright and spoke, he knew not why, a name, he knew not whose.

Halpin Frayser was not much of a philosopher, nor a scientist. The circumstance that, waking from a deep sleep at night in the midst of a forest, he had spoken aloud a name that he had not in memory and hardly had in mind did not arouse an enlightened curiosity to investigate the phenomenon. He thought it odd, and with a little perfunctory shiver, as if in deference to a seasonal presumption that the night was chill, he lay down again and went to sleep. But his sleep was no longer dreamless.

He thought he was walking along a dusty road that showed white in the gathering darkness of a summer night. Whence and whither it led, and why he traveled it, he did not know, though all seemed simple and natural, as is the way in dreams; for in the Land Beyond the Bed surprises cease from troubling and the judgement is at rest. Soon he came to a parting of the ways; leading from the highway was a road less traveled, having the appearance, indeed, of having been long abandoned, because, he thought, it led to something evil; yet he turned into it without hesitation, impelled by some imperious necessity.

As he pressed forward he became conscious that his way was haunted by invisible existences whom he

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could not definitely figure to his mind. From among the trees on either side he caught broken and incoherent whispers in a strange tongue which yet he partly understood. They seemed to him fragmentary utterances of a monstrous conspiracy against his body and soul.

It was now long after nightfall, yet the interminable forest through which he journeyed was lit with a wan glimmer having no point of diffusion, for in its mysterious lumination nothing cast a shadow. A shallow pool in the guttered depression of an old wheel rut, as from a recent rain, met his eye with a crimson gleam. He stooped and plunged his hand into it. It stained his fingers; it was blood! Blood, he then observed, was about him everywhere. The weeds growing rankly by the roadside showed it in blots and splashes on their big, broad leaves. Patches of dry dust between the wheelways were pitted and spattered as with a red rain. Defiling the trunks of the trees were broad maculations of crimson, and blood dripped like dew from their foliage.

All this he observed with a terror which seemed not incompatible with the fulfilment of a natural expectation. It seemed to him that it was all in expiation of some crime which, though conscious of his guilt, he could not rightly remember. To the menaces and mysteries of his surroundings the consciousness was an added horror. Vainly he sought by tracing life backward in memory, to reproduce the moment of his sin; scenes and incidents came crowding tumult-

uously into his mind, one picture effacing another, or commingling with it in confusion and obscurity, but nowhere could he catch a glimpse of what he sought. The failure augmented his terror; he felt as one who has murdered in the dark, not knowing whom nor why. So frightful was the situation—the mysterious light burned with so silent and awful a menace; the noxious plants, the trees that by common consent are invested with a melancholy or baleful character, so openly in his sight conspired against his peace; from overhead and all about came so audible and startling whispers and the sighs of creatures so obviously not of earth—that he could endure it no longer, and with a great effort to break some malign spell that bound his faculties to silence and inaction, he shouted with the full strength of his lungs! His voice, broken, it seemed, into an infinite multitude of unfamiliar sounds, went babbling and stammering away into the distant reaches of the forest, died into silence, and all was as before. But he had made a beginning at resistance and was encouraged. He said:

“I will not submit unheard. There may be powers that are not malignant traveling this accursed road. I shall leave them a record and an appeal. I shall relate my wrongs, the persecutions that I endure—I, a helpless mortal, a penitent, an unoffending poet!” Halpin Frayser was a poet only as he was a penitent: in his dream.

Taking from his clothing a small red-leather pocketbook, one-half of which was leaved for memo-

randa,* he discovered that he was without a pencil. He broke a twig from a bush, dipped it into a pool of blood and wrote rapidly. He had hardly touched the paper with the point of his twig when a low, wild peal of laughter broke out at a measureless distance away, and growing ever louder, seemed approaching ever nearer; a soulless, heartless, and unjoyous laugh, like that of the loon, solitary by the lakeside at midnight; a laugh which culminated in an unearthly shout close at hand, then died away by slow gradations, as if the accursed being that uttered it had withdrawn over the verge of the world whence it had come. But the man felt that this was not so—that it was nearby and had not moved.

A strange sensation began slowly to take possession of his body and his mind. He could not have said which, if any, of his senses was affected; he felt it rather as a consciousness—a mysterious mental assurance of some overpowering presence—some supernatural malevolence different in kind from the invisible existences that swarmed about him, and superior to them in power. He knew that it had uttered that hideous laugh. And now it seemed to be approaching him; from what direction he did not know—dared not conjecture. All his former fears were forgotten or merged in the gigantic terror that now held him in thrall. Apart from that, he had but one thought: to complete his written appeal to the benign powers who, traversing the haunted wood, might sometime rescue him if he should be denied the

blessing of annihilation. He wrote with terrible rapidity, the twig in his fingers rilling blood without renewal*; but in the middle of a sentence his hands denied their service to his will, his arms fell to his sides, the book to the earth; and powerless to move or cry out, he found himself staring into the sharply drawn face and blank, dead eyes of his own mother, standing white and silent in the garments of the grave!

II

In his youth Halpin Frayser had lived with his parents in Nashville, Tennessee. The Fraysers were well-to-do, having a good position in such society as had survived the wreck wrought by civil war. Their children had the social and educational opportunities of their time and place, and had responded to good associations and instruction with agreeable manners and cultivated minds. Halpin being the youngest and not over-robust was perhaps a trifle spoiled. He had the double disadvantage of a mother's assiduity and a father's neglect. Frayser père* was what no Southern man of means is not—a politician. His country, or rather his section and state, made demands upon his time and attention so exacting that to those of his family he was compelled to turn an ear partly deafened by the thunder of the political captains and the shouting, his own included.

Young Halpin was of a dreamy, indolent and rather romantic turn, somewhat more addicted to

The Death of Halpin Frayser

literature than law, the profession to which he was bred. Among these of his relations who professed the modern faith of heredity it was well understood that in him the character of the late Myron Bayne, a maternal great-grandfather, had revisited the glimpses of the moon*—by which orb Bayne had in his lifetime been sufficiently affected to be a poet of no small Colonial distinction.* If not specially observed, it was observable that while a Frayser who was not the proud possessor of a sumptuous copy of the ancestral “poetical works” (printed at the family expense, and long ago withdrawn from an inhospitable market) was a rare Frayser indeed, there was an illogical indisposition to honor the great deceased in the person of his spiritual successor. Halpin was pretty generally deprecated as an intellectual black sheep who was likely at any moment to disgrace the flock by bleating in meter. The Tennessee Fraysers were a practical folk—not practical in the popular sense of devotion to sordid pursuits, but having a robust contempt for any qualities unfitting a man for the wholesome vocation of politics.

In justice to young Halpin it should be said that while in him were pretty faithfully reproduced most of the mental and moral characteristics ascribed by history and family tradition to the famous Colonial bard, his succession to the gift and faculty divine was purely inferential. Not only had he never been known to court the muse, but in truth he could not have written correctly a line of verse to save himself from

the Killer of the Wise.* Still, there was no knowing when the dorman faculty might wake and smite the lyre.

In the meantime the young man was rather a loose fish,* anyhow. Between him and his mother was the most perfect sympathy, for secretly the lady was herself a devout disciple of the late and great Myron Bayne, though with the tact so generally and justly admired in her sex (despite the hardy calumniators who insist that it is essentially the same thing as cunning) she had always taken care to conceal her weakness from all eyes but those of him who shared it. Their common guilt in respect of that was an added tie between them. If in Halpin's youth his mother had spoiled him, he had assuredly done his part toward being spoiled. As he grew to such manhood as is attainable by a Southerner who does not care which way elections go, the attachment between him and his beautiful mother—whom from early childhood he had called Katy—became yearly stronger and more tender. In these two romantic natures was manifest in a signal way that neglected phenomenon, the dominance of the sexual element in all the relations of life, strengthening, softening, and beautifying even those of consanguinity. The two were nearly inseparable, and by strangers observing their manner were not infrequently mistaken for lovers.

Entering his mother's boudoir one day Halpin Frayser kissed her upon the forehead, toyed for a

moment with a lock of her dark hair which had escaped from its confining pins, and said, with an obvious effort at calmness:

“Would you greatly mind, Katy, if I were called away to California for a few weeks?”

It was hardly needful for Katy to answer with her lips a question to which her telltale cheeks had made instant reply. Evidently she would greatly mind; and the tears, too, sprang into her large brown eyes as corroborative testimony.

“Ah, my son,” she said, looking up into his face with infinite tenderness, “I should have known that this was coming. Did I not lie awake a half of the night weeping because, during the other half, Grandfather Bayne had come to me in a dream, and standing by his portrait—young, too, and handsome as that—pointed to yours on the same wall? And when I looked it seemed that I could not see the features; you had been painted with a face cloth, such as we put upon the dead. Your father has laughed at me, but you and I, dear, know that such things are not for nothing. And I saw below the edge of the cloth the marks of hands on your throat—forgive me, but we have not been used to keep such things from each other. Perhaps you have another interpretation. Perhaps it does not mean that you will go to California. Or maybe you will take me with you?”

It must be confessed that this ingenious interpretation of the dream in the light of newly discovered evidence did not wholly commend itself to the son's

more logical mind; he had, for the moment at least, a conviction that it foreshadowed a more simple and immediate, if less tragic, disaster than a visit to the Pacific Coast. It was Halpin Frayser's impression that he was to be garroted on his native heath.

"Are there not medicinal springs in California?" Mrs. Frayser resumed before he had time to give her the true reading of the dream—"places where one recovers from rheumatism and neuralgia? Look—my fingers feel so stiff; and I am almost sure they have been giving me great pain while I slept."

She held out her hands for his inspection. What diagnosis of her case the young man may have thought it best to conceal with a smile the historian is unable to state, but for himself he feels bound to say that fingers looking less stiff, and showing fewer evidences of even insensible pain, have seldom been submitted for medical inspection by even the fairest patient desiring a prescription of unfamiliar scenes.

The outcome of it was that of these two odd persons having equally odd notions of duty, the one went to California, as the interest of his client required, and the other remained at home in compliance with a wish that her husband was scarcely conscious of entertaining.

While in San Francisco Halpin Frayser was walking one dark night along the waterfront of the city, when, with a suddenness that surprised and disconcerted him, he became a sailor. He was in fact "shanghaied" aboard a gallant, gallant ship, and

sailed for a far countree. Nor did his misfortunes end with the voyage; for the ship was cast ashore on an island of the South Pacific, and it was six years afterward when the survivors were taken off by a venturesome trading schooner and brought back to San Francisco.

Though poor in purse, Frayser was no less proud in spirit than he had been in the years that seemed ages and ages ago. He would accept no assistance from strangers, and it was while living with a fellow survivor near the town of St. Helena, awaiting news and remittances from home, that he had gone gunning and dreaming.

III

The apparition confronting the dreamer in the haunted wood—the thing so like, yet so unlike his mother—was horrible! It stirred no love nor longing in his heart; it came unattended with pleasant memories of a golden past—inspired no sentiment of any kind; all the finer emotions were swallowed up in fear. He tried to turn and run from before it, but his legs were as lead; he was unable to lift his feet from the ground. His arms hung helpless at his sides; of his eyes only he retained control, and these he dared not remove from the lusterless orbs of the apparition, which he knew was not a soul without a body, but that most dreadful of all existence infesting that haunted wood—a body without a soul! In its blank

stare was neither love, nor pity, nor intelligence—nothing to which to address an appeal for mercy. “An appeal will not lie,”* he thought, with an absurd reversion to professional slang, making the situation more horrible, as the fire of a cigar might light up a tomb.

For a time, which seemed so long that the world grew gray with age and sin, and the haunted forest, having fulfilled its purpose in this monstrous culmination of its terrors, vanished out of his consciousness with all its sights and sounds, the apparition stood within a pace, regarding him with the mindless malevolence of a wild brute; then thrust its hands forward and sprang upon him with appalling ferocity! The act released his physical energies without unfettering his will; his mind was still spellbound, but his powerful body and agile limbs, endowed with a blind, insensate life of their own, resisted stoutly and well. For an instant he seemed to see this unnatural contest between a dead intelligence and a breathing mechanism only as a spectator—such fancies are in dreams; then he regained his identity almost as if by a leap forward into his body, and the straining automaton had a directing will as alert and fierce as that of its hideous antagonist.

But what mortal can cope with a creature of his dream? The imagination creating the enemy is already vanquished; the combat's result is the combat's cause. Despite his struggles—despite his strength and activity, which seemed wasted in a void,

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he felt the cold fingers close upon his throat. Borne backward to the earth, he saw above him the dead and drawn face within a hand's breadth of his own, and then all was black. A sound as of the beating of distant drums—a murmur of swarming voices, a sharp, far cry signing all to silence, and Halpin Frayser dreamed that he was dead.

IV

A warm, clear night had been followed by a morning of drenching fog. At about the middle of the afternoon of the preceding day a little whiff of light vapor—a mere thickening of the atmosphere, the ghost of a cloud—had been observed clinging to the western side of Mount St. Helena, away up along the barren altitudes near the summit. It was so thin, so diaphanous, so like a fancy made visible, that one would have said, "Look quickly! in a moment it will be gone."

In a moment it was visibly larger and denser. While with one edge it clung to the mountain, with the other it reached farther and farther out into the air above the lower slopes. At the same time it extended itself to north and south, joining small patches of mist that appeared to come out of the mountainside on exactly the same level, with an intelligent design to be absorbed. And so it grew and grew until the summit was shut out of view from the valley, and over the valley itself was an ever-extending canopy, opaque and gray. At Calistoga, which

lies near the head of the valley and the foot of the mountain, there were a starless night and a sunless morning. The fog, sinking into the valley, had reached southerward, swallowing up ranch after ranch, until it had blotted out the town of St. Helena, nine miles away. The dust in the road was laid; trees were adrip with moisture*; birds sat silent in their coverts; the morning light was wan and ghastly, with neither color nor fire.

Two men left the town of St. Helena at the first glimmer of dawn, and walked along the road northward up the valley toward Calistoga. They carried guns on their shoulders, yet no one having knowledge of such matters could have mistaken them for hunters of bird or beast. They were a deputy sheriff from Napa and a detective from San Francisco—Holker and Jaralson, respectively. Their business was man-hunting.

“How far is it?” inquired Holker, as they strode along, their feet stirring white the dust beneath the damp surface of the road.

“The White Church? Only a half mile farther,” the other answered. “By the way,” he added, “it is neither white nor a church; it is an abandoned schoolhouse, gray with age and neglect. Religious services were once held in it—when it was white—and there is a graveyard that would delight a poet. Can you guess why I sent for you, and told you to come heeled?”

“Oh, I never have bothered you about things of

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that kind. I've always found you communicative when the time came. But if I may hazard a guess, you want me to help you arrest one of the corpses in the graveyard."

"You remember Branscom?" said Jaralson, treating his companion's wit with the inattention that it deserved.

"The chap who cut his wife's throat? I ought. I wasted a week's work on him and had my expenses for my trouble. There is a reward of five hundred dollars, but none of us ever got a sight of him. You don't mean to say—"

"Yes, I do. He has been under the noses of you fellows all the time. He comes by night to the old graveyard at the White Church."

"The devil! That's where they buried his wife."

"Well, you fellows might have had sense enough to suspect that he would return to her grave sometime."

"The very last place that anyone would have expected him to return to."

"But you had exhausted all the other places. Learning your failure at them, I 'laid for him'* there."

"And you found him?"

"Damn it, he found me! The rascal got the drop on me—regularly held me up and made me travel. It's God's mercy that he didn't go through me.* Oh, he's a good one, and I fancy the half of that reward is enough for me if you're needy."

Holker laughed good-humoredly, and explained

that his creditors were never more importunate.

"I wanted merely to show you the ground, and arrange a plan with you," the detective explained. "I thought it as well for us to be heeled, even in daylight."

"The man must be insane," said the deputy sheriff. "The reward is for his capture and conviction. If he's mad he won't be convicted."

Mr. Holker was so profoundly affected by that possible failure of justice that he involuntarily stopped in the middle of the road, then resumed his walk with abated zeal.

"Well, he looks it," assented Jaralson. "I'm bound to admit that a more unshaven, unshorn, unkempt, and uneverything wretch I never saw* outside the ancient and honorable order of tramps. But I've gone in for him,* and can't make up my mind to let go. There's glory in it for us, anyhow. Not another soul knows that he is this side of the Mountains of the Moon."*

"All right," Holker said, "we will go and view the ground," and he added, in the words of a once favorite inscription for tombstones, " 'where you must shortly lie'—I mean, if old Branscom ever gets tired of you and your impertinent intrusion. By the way, I heard the other day that Branscom was not his real name."

"What is?"

"I can't recall it. I had lost all interest in the wretch, and it did not fix itself in my memo-

ry—something like Pardee. The woman whose throat he had the bad taste to cut was a widow when he met her. She had come to California to look up some relatives—there are persons who will do that sometimes. But you know all that.”

“Naturally.”

“But not knowing the right name, by what happy inspiration did you find the right grave? The man who told me what the name was said it had been cut on the headboard.”

“I don’t know the right grave.” Jaralson was apparently a trifle reluctant to admit his ignorance of so important a point of his plan. “I have been watching about the place generally. A part of our work this morning will be to identify that grave. Here is the White Church.”

For a long distance the road had been bordered by fields on both sides, but now on the left there was a forest of oaks, madronos, and gigantic spruces whose lower parts only could be seen, dim and ghostly in the fog. The undergrowth was, in places, thick, but nowhere impenetrable. For some moments Holker saw nothing of the building, but as they turned into the woods it revealed itself in faint gray outline through the fog, looking huge and far away. A few steps more, and it was within an arm’s length, distinct, dark with moisture, and insignificant in size. It had the usual country-schoolhouse form—belonged to the packing-box order of architecture; had an underpinning of stones, a moss-grown roof, and

blank window spaces, whence both glass and sash had long departed. It was ruined, but not a ruin—a typical Californian substitute for what are known to guidebookers abroad as “monuments of the past.” With scarcely a glance at this uninteresting structure Jaralson moved on into the dripping undergrowth beyond.

“I will show you where he held me up,” he said. “This is the graveyard.”

Here and there among the bushes were small enclosures containing graves, sometimes no more than one. They were recognized as graves by the discolored stones or rotting boards at head and foot, leaning at all angles, some prostrate, by the ruined picket fences surrounding them; or, infrequently, by the mound itself showing its gravel through the fallen leaves. In many instances nothing marked the spot where lay the vestiges of some poor mortal—who, leaving “a large circle of sorrowing friends,”* had been left by them in turn—except a depression in the earth, more lasting than that in the spirits of the mourners. The paths, if any paths had been, were long obliterated; trees of a considerable size had been permitted to grow up from the graves and thrust aside with root or branch the enclosing fences. Over all was that air of abandonment and decay which seems nowhere so fit and significant as in a village of the forgotten dead.

As the two men, Jaralson leading, pushed their way through the growth of young trees, that enter-

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prising man suddenly stopped and brought up his shotgun to the height of his breast, uttered a low note to warning, and stood motionless, his eyes fixed upon something ahead. As well as he could, obstructed by brush, his companion, though seeing nothing, imitated the posture and so stood, prepared for what might ensue. A moment later Jaralson moved cautiously forward, the other following.

Under the branches of an enormous spruce lay the dead body of a man. Standing silent above it they noted such particulars as first strike the attention—the face, the attitude, the clothing; whatever most promptly and plainly answers the unspoken question of a sympathetic curiosity.

The body lay upon its back, the legs wide apart. One arm was thrust upward, the other outward; but the latter was bent acutely, and the hand was near the throat. Both hands were tightly clenched. The whole attitude was that of desperate but ineffectual resistance to—what?

Nearby lay a shotgun and a game bag through the meshes of which was seen the plumage of shot birds. All about were evidences of a furious struggle: small sprouts of poison oak were bent and denuded of leaf and bark; dead and rotting leaves had been pushed into heaps and ridges on both sides of the legs by the action of other feet than theirs; alongside the hips were unmistakable impressions of human knees.

The nature of the struggle was made clear by a glance at the dead man's throat and face. While

breast and hands were white, those were purple—almost black. The shoulders lay upon a low mound, and the head was turned back at an angle otherwise impossible, the expanded eyes staring blankly backward in a direction opposite to that of the feet. From the froth filling the open mouth the tongue protruded, black and swollen. The throat showed horrible contusions; not mere finger marks, but bruises and lacerations wrought by two strong hands that must have buried themselves in the yielding flesh, maintaining their terrible grasp until long after death. Breast, throat, face were wet; the clothing was saturated: drops of water, condensed from the fog, studded the hair and mustache.

All this the two men observed without speaking—almost at a glance. Then Holker said:

“Poor devil! He had a rough deal.”*

Jaralson was making a vigilant circumspection of the forest, his shotgun held in both hands and at full cock, his finger upon the trigger.

“The work of a maniac,” he said, without withdrawing his eyes from the enclosing wood. “It was done by Branscom—Pardee.”

Something half hidden by the disturbed leaves on the earth caught Holker’s attention. It was a red-leather pocketbook. He picked it up and opened it. It contained leaves of white paper for memoranda, and upon the first leaf was the name “Halpin Frayser.” Written in red on several succeeding leaves—scrawled as if in haste and barely

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legible—were the following lines, which Holker read aloud, while his companion continued scanning the dim gray confines of their narrow world and hearing matter of apprehension in the drip of water from every burdened branch:

Enthralled by some mysterious spell, I stood
In the lit gloom of an enchanted wood.

The cypress there and myrtle twined their boughs,
Significant, in baleful brotherhood.

The brooding willow whispered to the yew;
Beneath, the deadly nightshade and the rue.

With immortelles self-woven into strange
Funereal shapes, and horrid nettles grew.

No song of bird nor any drone of bees,
Nor light leaf lifted by the wholesome breeze:

The air was stagnant all, and Silence was
A living thing that breathed among the trees.

Conspiring spirits whispered in the gloom,
Half-heard, the stilly secrets of the tomb.

With blood the trees were all adrip; the leaves
Shone in the witch-light with a ruddy bloom.

I cried aloud!—the spell, unbroken still,
Rested upon my spirit and my will.

Unsouled, unhearted, hopeless and forlorn,
I strove with monstrous presages of ill!

At last the viewless—

Holker ceased reading; there was no more to read. The manuscript broke off in the middle of a line.

“That sounds like Bayne,” said Jaralson, who was something of a scholar in his way. He had abated his vigilance and stood looking down at the body.

“Who’s Bayne?” Holker asked rather incuriously.

“Myron Bayne, a chap who flourished in the early years of the nation—more than a century ago. Wrote mighty dismal stuff; I have his collected works. That poem is not among them, but it must have been omitted by mistake.”

“It is cold,” said Holker. “Let us leave here; we must have up the coroner from Napa.”

Jaralson said nothing, but made a movement in compliance. Passing the end of the slight elevation of earth upon which the dead man’s head and shoulders lay, his foot struck some hard substance under the rotting forest leaves, and he took the trouble to kick it into view. It was a fallen headboard, and painted on it were the hardly decipherable words, “Catherine Larue.”

“Larue, Larue!” exclaimed Holker with sudden animation. “Why, that is the real name of Branscom—not Pardee. And—bless my soul! how it all comes to me—the murdered woman’s name had been Frayser!”

“There is some rascally mystery here,” said Detective Jaralson. “I hate anything of that kind.”

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There came to them out of the fog—seemingly from a great distance—the sound of a laugh, a low, deliberate, soulless laugh, which had no more of joy than that of a hyena night-prowling in the desert; a laugh that rose by slow gradation, louder and louder, clearer, more distinct and terrible, until it seemed barely outside the narrow circle of their vision; a laugh so unnatural, so unhuman, so devilish, that it filled those hardy man-hunters with a sense of dread unspeakable! They did not move their weapons nor think of them; the menace of that horrible sound was not of the kind to be met with arms. As it had grown out of silence, so now it died away; from a culminating shout which had seemed almost in their ears, it drew itself away into the distance, until its failing notes, joyless and mechanical to the last, sank to silence at a measureless remove.





THE SECRET OF MACARGER'S GULCH

orthwestwardly from Indian Hill, about nine miles as the crow flies, is Macarger's Gulch. It is not much of a gulch—a mere depression between two wooded ridges of inconsiderable height. From its mouth up to

The Secret of Macarger's Gulch

its head—for gulches, like rivers, have an anatomy of their own—the distance does not exceed two miles, and the width at bottom is at only one place more than a dozen yards; for most of the distance on either side of the little brook which drains it in winter, and goes dry in the early spring, there is no level ground at all; the steep slopes of the hills, covered with an almost impenetrable growth of manzanita and chemisal,* are parted by nothing but the width of the watercourse. No one but an occasional enterprising hunter of the vicinity ever goes into Macarger's Gulch, and five miles away it is unknown, even by name. Within that distance in any direction are far more conspicuous topographical features without names, and one might try in vain to ascertain by local inquiry the origin of the name of this one.

About midway between the head and the mouth of Macarger's Gulch, the hill on the right as you ascend is cloven by another gulch, a short dry one, and at the junction of the two is a level space of two or three acres, and there a few years ago stood an old board house containing one small room. How the component parts of the house, few and simple as they were, had been assembled at that almost inaccessible point is a problem in the solution of which there would be greater satisfaction than advantage. Possibly the creek bed is a re-formed road. It is certain that the gulch was at one time pretty thoroughly prospected by miners, who must have had some means of getting in with at least pack animals carrying tools and

supplies; their profits, apparently, were not such as would have justified any considerable outlay to connect Macarger's Gulch with any center of civilization enjoying the distinction of a sawmill. The house, however, was there, most of it. It lacked a door and a window frame, and the chimney of mud and stones had fallen into an unlovely heap, overgrown with rank weeds. Such humble furniture as there may once have been, and much of the lower weatherboarding, had served as fuel in the campfires of hunters; as had also, probably, the kurbing of an old well, which at the time I write of existed in the form of a rather wide but not very deep depression nearby.

One afternoon in the summer of 1874, I passed up Macarger's Gulch from the narrow valley into which it opens, by following the dry bed of the brook. I was quail-shooting and had made a bag of about a dozen birds by the time I had reached the house described, of whose existence I was until then unaware. After rather carelessly inspecting the ruin I resumed my sport, and having fairly good success prolonged it until near sunset, when it occurred to me that I was a long way from any human habitation—too far to reach one by nightfall. But in my game bag was food, and the old house would afford shelter, if shelter were needed on a warm and dewless night in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, where one may sleep in comfort on the pine needles, without covering. I am fond of solitude and love the night, so my resolution to "camp out" was soon taken, and by the time that

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it was dark I had made my bed of boughs and grasses in a corner of the room and was roasting a quail at a fire that I had kindled on the hearth. The smoke escaped out of the ruined chimney, the light illuminated the room with a kindly glow, and as I ate my simple meal of plain bird and drank the remains of a bottle of red wine which had served me all the afternoon in place of the water which the region did not supply, I experienced a sense of comfort which better fare and accommodations do not always give.

Nevertheless, there was something lacking. I had a sense of comfort, but not of security. I detected myself staring more frequently at the open doorway and blank window than I could find warrant for doing. Outside these apertures all was black, and I was unable to repress a certain feeling of apprehension as my fancy pictured the outer world and filled it with unfriendly entities, natural and supernatural—chief among which, in their respective classes, were the grizzly bear, which I knew was occasionally still seen in that region, and the ghost, which I had reason to think was not. Unfortunately, our feelings do not always respect the law of probabilities, and to me that evening, the possible and the impossible were equally disquieting.

Everyone who has had experience in the matter must have observed that one confronts the actual and imaginary perils of the night with far less apprehension in the open air than in a house with an open doorway. I felt this now as I lay on my leafy couch in

a corner of the room next to the chimney and permitted my fire to die out. So strong became my sense of the presence of something malign and menacing in the place, that I found myself almost unable to withdraw my eyes from the opening, as in the deepening darkness it became more and more indistinct. And when the last little flame flickered and went out I grasped the shotgun which I had laid at my side and actually turned the muzzle in the direction of the now invisible entrance, my thumb on one of the hammers, ready to cock the piece, my breath suspended, my muscles rigid and tense. But later I laid down the weapon with a sense of shame and mortification. What did I fear, and why?—I, to whom the night had been

a more familiar face
Than that of man—

I, in whom that element of hereditary superstition from which none of us is altogether free had given to solitude and darkness and silence only a more alluring interest and charm! I was unable to comprehend my folly, and losing in the conjecture the thing conjectured of, I fell asleep. And then I dreamed.

I was in a great city in a foreign land—a city whose people were of my own race, with minor differences of speech and costume; yet precisely what these were I could not say; my sense of them was indistinct. The city was dominated by a great castle upon an over-

looking height whose name I knew, but could not speak. I walked through many streets, some broad and straight with high, modern buildings, some narrow, gloomy, and tortuous, between the gables of quaint old houses whose overhanging stories, elaborately ornamented with carvings in wood and stone, almost met above my head.

I sought someone whom I had never seen, yet knew that I should recognize when found. My quest was not aimless and fortuitous; it had a definite method. I turned from one street into another without hesitation and threaded a maze of intricate passages, devoid of the fear of losing my way.

Presently I stopped before a low door in a plain stone house which might have been the dwelling of an artisan of the better sort, and without announcing myself, entered. The room, rather sparsely furnished, and lighted by a single window with small diamond-shaped panes, had but two occupants: a man and a woman. They took no notice of my intrusion, a circumstance which, in the manner of dreams, appeared entirely natural. They were not conversing; they sat apart, unoccupied and sullen.

The woman was young and rather stout, with fine large eyes and a certain grave beauty; my memory of her expression is exceedingly vivid, but in dreams one does not observe the details of faces. About her shoulders was a plaid shawl. The man was older, dark, with an evil face made more forbidding by a long scar extending from near the left temple diag-

onally downward into the black mustache; though in my dreams it seemed rather to haunt the face as a thing apart—I can express it no otherwise—than to belong to it. The moment that I found the man and woman I knew them to be husband and wife.

What followed, I remember indistinctly; all was confused and inconsistent—made so, I think, by gleams of consciousness. It was as if two pictures, the scene of my dream, and my actual surroundings, had been blended, one overlying the other, until the former, gradually fading, disappeared, and I was broad awake in the deserted cabin, entirely and tranquilly conscious of my situation.

My foolish fear was gone, and opening my eyes I saw that my fire, not altogether burned out, had revived by the falling of a stick and was again lighting the room. I had probably slept only a few minutes, but my commonplace dream had somehow so strongly impressed me that I was no longer drowsy; and after a little while I rose, pushed the embers of my fire together, and lighting my pipe proceeded in a rather ludicrously methodical way to meditate upon my vision.

It would have puzzled me then to say in what respect it was worth attention. In the first moment of serious thought that I gave to the matter I recognized the city of my dream as Edinburgh, where I had never been; so if the dream was a memory it was a memory of pictures and description. The recognition somehow deeply impressed me; it was as if some-

thing in my mind insisted rebelliously against will and reason on the importance of all this. And that faculty, whatever it was, asserted also a control of my speech. "Surely," I said aloud, quite involuntarily, "the MacGregors must have come here from Edinburgh."

At the moment, neither the substance of this remark, nor the fact of my making it, surprised me in the least; it seemed entirely natural that I should know the name of my dreamfolk and something of their history. But the absurdity of it all soon dawned upon me: I laughed aloud, knocked the ashes from my pipe, and again stretched myself upon my bed of boughs and grass, where I lay staring absently into my failing fire, with no further thought of either my dream or my surroundings. Suddenly the single remaining flame crouched for a moment, then, springing upward, lifted itself clear of its embers and expired in air. The darkness was absolute.

At that instant—almost, it seemed, before the gleam of the blaze had faded from my eyes—there was a dull, dead sound as of some heavy body falling upon the floor, which shook beneath me as I lay. I sprang to a sitting posture and groped at my side for my gun; my notion was that some wild beast had leaped in through the open window. While the flimsy structure was still shaking from the impact I heard the sound of blows, the scuffling of feet upon the floor, and then—it seemed to come from almost within reach of my hand, the sharp shrieking of a

woman in mortal agony. So horrible a cry I had never heard nor conceived; it utterly unnerved me; I was conscious for a moment of nothing but my own terror! Fortunately my hand now found the weapon of which it was in search, and the familiar touch somewhat restored me. I leaped to my feet, straining my eyes to pierce the darkness. The violent sounds had ceased, but more terrible than these, I heard, at what seemed long intervals, the faint intermittent gasping of some living, dying thing!

As my eyes grew accustomed to the dim light of the coals in the fireplace, I saw first the shapes of the door and window, looking blacker than the black of the walls. Next, the distinction between wall and floor became discernible, and at last I was sensible to the form and full expanse of the floor from end to end and side to side. Nothing was visible, and the silence was unbroken.

With a hand that shook a little, the other still grasping my gun, I restored my fire and made a critical examination of the place. There was nowhere any sign that the cabin had been entered. My own tracks were visible in the dust covering the floor, but there were no others. I relit my pipe, provided fresh fuel by ripping a thin board or two from the inside of the house—I did not care to go into the darkness out of doors—and passed the rest of the night smoking and thinking, and feeding my fire; not for added years of life would I have permitted that little flame to expire again.

The Secret of Macarger's Gulch

Some years afterward I met in Sacramento a man named Morgan, to whom I had a note of introduction from a friend in San Francisco. Dining with him one evening at his home I observed various trophies upon the wall, indicating that he was fond of shooting. It turned out that he was, and in relating some of his feats he mentioned having been in the region of my adventure.

"Mr. Morgan," I asked abruptly, "do you know a place up there called Macarger's Gulch?"

"I have good reason to," he replied. "It was I who gave to the newspapers, last year, the accounts of the finding of the skeleton there."

I had not heard of it; the accounts had been published, it appeared, while I was absent in the East.

"By the way," said Morgan, "the name of the gulch is a corruption; it should have been called 'MacGregor's.' My dear," he added, speaking to his wife, "Mr. Elderson has upset his wine."

That was hardly accurate—I had simply dropped it, glass and all.

"There was an old shanty once in the gulch," Morgan resumed when the ruin wrought by my awkwardness had been repaired, "but just previously to my visit it had been blown down, or rather blown away, for its *débris* was scattered all about, the very floor being parted, plank from plank. Between two of the sleepers still in position I and my companion observed the remnant of a plaid shawl, and examin-

ing it found that it was wrapped about the shoulders of the body of a woman, of which but little remained besides the bones, partly covered with fragments of clothing, and brown dry skin. But we will spare Mrs. Morgan," he added with a smile. The lady had indeed exhibited signs of disgust rather than sympathy.

"It is necessary to say, however," he went on, "that the skull was fractured in several places, as by blows of some blunt instrument; and that instrument itself—a pick-handle, still stained with blood—lay under the boards nearby."

Mr. Morgan turned to his wife. "Pardon me, my dear," he said with affected solemnity, "for mentioning these disagreeable particulars, the natural though regrettable incidents of a conjugal quarrel—resulting, doubtless, from the luckless wife's insubordination."

"I ought to be able to overlook it," the lady replied with composure. "You have so many times asked me to in those very words."

I thought he seemed rather glad to go on with his story.

"From these and other circumstances," he said, "the coroner's jury found that the deceased, Janet MacGregor, came to her death from blows inflicted by some person to the jury unknown; but it was added that the evidence pointed strongly to her husband, Thomas MacGregor, as the guilty person. But Thomas MacGregor has never been found nor heard of. It was learned that the couple came from Edin-

The Secret of Macarger's Gulch

burgh, but not—my dear, do you not observe that Mr. Elderson's boneplate* has water in it?"

I had deposited a chicken bone in my finger bowl.

"In a little cupboard I found a photograph of MacGregor, but it did not lead to his capture."

"Will you let me see it?" I said.

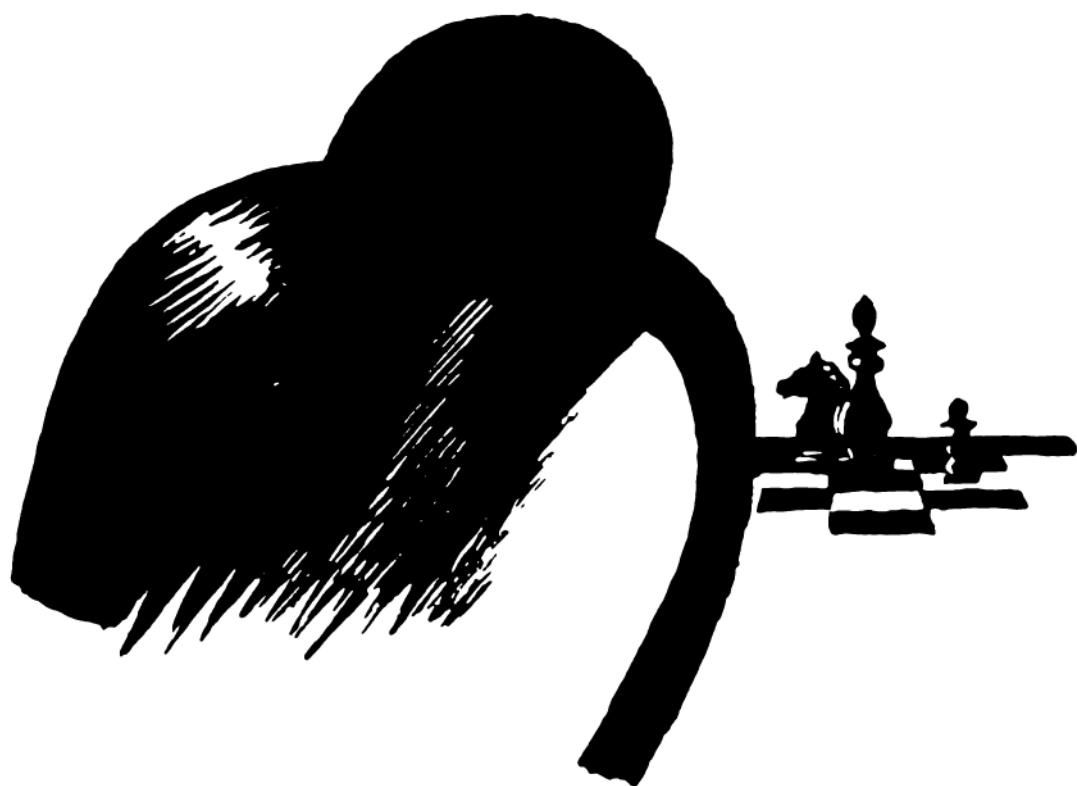
The picture showed a dark man with an evil face made more forbidding by a long scar extending from near the temple diagonally downward into the black mustache.

"By the way, Mr. Elderson," said my affable host, "may I know why you asked about Macarger's Gulch?"

"I lost a mule near there once," I replied, "and the mischance has—has quite—upset me."

"My dear," said Mr. Morgan, with the mechanical intonation of an interpreter translating, "the loss of Mr. Elderson's mule has peppered his coffee."





“

A

MOXON'S MASTER

re you serious?—Do you really believe that a machine thinks?”

I got no immediate reply. Moxon was apparently intent upon the coals in the grate, touching them deftly here and there with the fire-poker till they

signified a sense of his attention by a brighter glow. For several weeks I had been observing in him a growing habit of delay in answering even the most trivial of commonplace questions. His air, however, was that of preoccupation rather than deliberation. One might have said that he had something on his mind.

Presently he said:

“What is a ‘machine’? The word has been variously defined. Here is one definition from a popular dictionary: ‘Any instrument or organization by which power is applied and made effective, or a desired effect produced.’ Well, then, is not a man a machine? And you will admit that he thinks—or thinks he thinks.”

“If you do not wish to answer my question,” I said, rather testily, “why not say so? All that you say is mere evasion. You know well enough that when I say ‘machine’ I do not mean a man, but something that man has made and controls.”

“When it does not control him,” he said, rising abruptly and looking out of a window, whence nothing was visible in the blackness of a stormy night. A moment later he turned about and with a smile said, “I beg your pardon; I had no thought of evasion. I considered the dictionary man’s unconscious testimony suggestive and worth something in the discussion. I can give your question a direct answer easily enough: I do believe that a machine thinks about the work that it is doing.”

That was direct enough, certainly. It was not altogether pleasing, for it tended to confirm a sad suspicion that Moxon's devotion to study and work in his machine shop had not been good for him. I knew, for one thing, that he suffered from insomnia, and that is no light affliction. Had it affected his mind? His reply to my question seemed to me then evidence that it had; perhaps I should think differently about it now. I was younger then, and among the blessings that are not denied to youth is ignorance. Incited by that great stimulant to controversy, I said:

"And what, pray, does it think with—in the absence of a brain?"

The reply, coming with less than his customary delay, took his favorite form of counterinterrogation:

"With what does a plant think—in the absence of a brain?"

"Ah, plants also belong to the philosopher class! I should be pleased to know some of their conclusions; you may omit the premises."

"Perhaps," he replied, apparently unaffected by my foolish irony, "you may be able to infer their convictions from their acts. I will spare you the familiar examples of the sensitive mimosa, the several insectivorous flowers and those whose stamens bend down and shake their pollen upon the entering bee in order that he may fertilize their distant mates. But observe this. In an open spot in my garden I planted a climbing vine. When it was barely above the surface

I set a stake into the soil a yard away. The vine at once made for it, but as it was about to reach it after several days I removed it a few feet. The vine at once altered its course, making an acute angle, and again made for the stake. This maneuver was repeated several times, but finally, as if discouraged, the vine abandoned the pursuit and ignoring further attempts to divert it traveled to a small tree, farther away, which it climbed.

“Roots of the eucalyptus will prolong themselves incredibly in search of moisture. A well-known horticulturist relates that one entered an old drain pipe and followed it until it came to a break, where a section of the pipe had been removed to make way for a stone wall that had been built across its course. The root left the drain and followed the wall until it found an opening where a stone had fallen out. It crept through and, following the other side of the wall back to the drain, entered the unexplored part and resumed its journey.”

“And all this?”

“Can you miss the significance of it? It shows the consciousness of plants. It proves that they think.”

“Even if it did—what then? We were speaking, not of plants, but of machines. They may be composed partly of wood—wood that no longer has vitality—or wholly of metal. Is thought an attribute also of the mineral kingdom?”

“How else do you explain the phenomena, for example, of crystallization?”

“I do not explain them.”

“Because you cannot without affirming what you wish to deny, namely, intelligent cooperation among the constituent elements of the crystals. When soldiers form lines, or hollow squares, you call it reason. When wild geese in flight take the form of a letter V you say instinct. When the homogeneous atoms of a mineral, moving freely in solution, arrange themselves into shapes mathematically perfect, or particles of frozen moisture into the symmetrical and beautiful forms of snowflakes, you have nothing to say. You have not even invented a name to conceal your heroic unreason.”

Moxon was speaking with unusual animation and earnestness. As he paused I heard in an adjoining room known to me as his machine shop, which no one but himself was permitted to enter, a singular thumping sound, as of someone pounding upon a table with an open hand. Moxon heard it at the same moment and, visibly agitated, rose and hurriedly passed into the room whence it came. I thought it odd that anyone else should be in there, and my interest in my friend—with doubtless a touch of unwarrantable curiosity—led me to listen intently, though, I am happy to say, not at the keyhole. There were confused sounds, as of a struggle or scuffle; the floor shook. I distinctly heard hard breathing and a hoarse whisper which said, “Damn you!” Then all was silent, and presently Moxon reappeared and said, with a rather sorry smile:

"Pardon me for leaving you so abruptly. I have a machine in there that lost its temper and cut up rough."

Fixing my eyes steadily upon his left cheek, which was traversed by four parallel excoriations showing blood, I said:

"How would it do to trim its nails?"

I could have spared myself the jest; he gave it no attention, but seated himself in the chair that he had left and resumed the interrupted monologue as if nothing had occurred.

Doubtless you do not hold with those (I need not name them to a man of your reading) who have taught that all matter is sentient, that every atom is a living, feeling, conscious being. *I* do. There is no such thing as dead, inert matter. It is all alive; all instinct with force, actual and potential; all sensitive to the same forces in its environment and susceptible to the contagion of higher and subtler ones residing in such superior organisms as it may be brought into relation with, as those of man when he is fashioning it into an instrument of his will. It absorbs something of his intelligence and purpose—more of them in proportion to the complexity of the resulting machine and that of its work.

"Do you happen to recall Herbert Spencer's* definition of life? I read it thirty years ago. He may have altered it afterward, for anything I know,* but in all that time I have been unable to think of a single word that could profitably be changed or added or

removed. It seems to me not only the best definition, but the only possible one.

“‘Life,’ he says, ‘is a definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external coexistences and sequences.’ ”*

“That defines the phenomenon,” I said, “but gives no hint of its cause.”

“That,” he replied, “is all that any definition can do. As Mill* points out, we know nothing of cause except as an antecedent—nothing of effect except as a consequent. Of certain phenomena, one never occurs without another, which is dissimilar: the first in point of time we call cause, the second, effect. One who had many times seen a rabbit pursued by a dog, and had never seen rabbits and dogs otherwise, would think the rabbit the cause of the dog.

“But I fear,” he added, laughing naturally enough, “that my rabbit is leading me a long way from the track of my legitimate quarry. I’m indulging in the pleasure of the chase for its own sake. What I want you to observe is that in Herbert Spencer’s definition of life the activity of a machine is included—there is nothing in the definition that is not applicable to it. According to this sharpest of observers and deepest of thinkers, if a man during his period of activity is alive, so is a machine when in operation. As an inventor and constructor of machines I know that to be true.”

Moxon was silent for a long time, gazing absently

into the fire. It was growing late and I thought it time to be going, but somehow I did not like the notion of leaving him in that isolated house, all alone except for the presence of some person of whose nature my conjectures could go no further than that it was unfriendly perhaps malign. Leaning toward him and looking earnestly into his eyes while making a motion with my hand through the door of his workshop, I said:

“Moxon, whom have you in there?”

Somewhat to my surprise he laughed lightly and answered without hesitation:

“Nobody. The incident that you have in mind was caused by my folly in leaving a machine in action with nothing to act upon, while I undertook the interminable task of enlightening your understanding. Do you happen to know that Consciousness is the creature of Rhythm?”

“O bother them both!” I replied, rising and laying hold of my overcoat. “I’m going to wish you good night. And I’ll add the hope that the machine which you inadvertently left in action will have her gloves on the next time you think it needful to stop her.”

Without waiting to observe the effect of my shot I left the house.

Rain was falling, and the darkness was intense. In the sky beyond the crest of a hill toward which I groped my way along precarious plank sidewalks and across miry, unpaved streets I could see the faint glow of the city’s lights, but behind me nothing was

visible but a single window of Moxon's house. It glowed with what seemed to me a mysterious and fateful meaning. I knew it was an uncurtained aperture in my friend's machine shop, and I had little doubt that he had resumed the studies interrupted by his duties as my instructor in mechanical consciousness and the fatherhood of Rhythm. Odd, and in some degree humorous, as his convictions seemed to me at that time, I could not wholly divest myself of the feeling that they had some tragic relation to his life and character—perhaps to his destiny—although I no longer entertained the notion that they were the vagaries of a disordered mind. Whatever might be thought of his views, his exposition of them was too logical for that. Over and over, his last words came back to me: "Consciousness is the creature of Rhythm." Bald and terse as the statement was, I now found it infinitely alluring. At each recurrence it broadened in meaning and deepened in suggestion. Why, here (I thought) is something upon which to found a philosophy. If consciousness is the product of rhythm, all things are conscious, for all have motion, and all motion is rhythmic. I wondered if Moxon knew the significance and breadth of his thought—the scope of this momentous generalization; or had he arrived at his philosophic faith by the tortuous and uncertain road of observation?

That faith was then new to me, and all Moxon's expounding had failed to make me a convert; but now it seemed as if a great light shone about me, like

that which fell upon Saul of Tarsus*; and out there in the storm and darkness and solitude I experienced what Lewes* calls "the endless variety and excitement of philosophic thought." I exulted in a new sense of knowledge, a new pride of reason. My feet seemed hardly to touch the earth; it was as if I were uplifted and borne through the air by invisible wings.

Yielding to an impulse to seek further light from him whom I now recognized as my master and guide, I had unconsciously turned about, and almost before I was aware of having done so found myself again at Moxon's door. I was drenched with rain, but felt no discomfort. Unable in my excitement to find the doorbell I instinctively tried the knob. It turned and, entering, I mounted the stairs to the room that I had so recently left. All was dark and silent; Moxon, as I had supposed, was in the adjoining room—the machine shop. Groping along the wall until I found the communicating door I knocked loudly several times but got no response, which I attributed to the uproar outside, for the wind was blowing a gale and dashing the rain against the thin walls in sheets. The drumming upon the shingle roof spanning the unceiled room was loud and incessant.

I had never been invited into the machine shop—had, indeed, been denied admittance, as had all others, with one exception, a skilled metalworker, of whom no one knew anything except that his name was Haley and his habit silence. But in my spiritual exaltation, discretion and civility were alike forgotten

and I opened the door. What I saw took all philosophical speculation out of me in short order.

Moxon sat facing me at the farther side of a small table upon which a single candle made all the light that was in the room. Opposite him, his back toward me, sat another person. On the table between the two was a chessboard; the men were playing. I knew little of chess, but as only a few pieces were on the board it was obvious that the game was near its close. Moxon was intensely interested—not so much, it seemed to me, in the game as in his antagonist, upon whom he had fixed so intent a look that, standing though I did directly in the line of his vision, I was altogether unobserved. His face was ghastly white, and his eyes glittered like diamonds. Of his antagonist I had only a back view, but that was sufficient; I should not have cared to see his face.

He was apparently not more than five feet in height, with proportions suggesting those of a gorilla—a tremendous breadth of shoulders, thick, short neck and broad, squat head, which had a tangled growth of black hair and was topped with a crimson fez. A tunic of the same color, belted tightly to the waist, reached the seat—apparently a box—upon which he sat; his legs and feet were not seen. His left forearm appeared to rest in his lap; he moved his pieces with his right hand, which seemed disproportionately long.

I had shrunk back and now stood a little to one side of the doorway and in shadow. If Moxon had

looked farther than the face of his opponent he could have observed nothing now, except that the door was open. Something forbade me either to enter or to retire, a feeling—I know not how it came—that I was in the presence of an imminent tragedy and might serve my friend by remaining. With a scarcely conscious rebellion against the indelicacy of the act, I remained.

The play was rapid. Moxon hardly glanced at the board before making his moves, and to my unskilled eye seemed to move the piece most convenient to his hand, his motions in doing so being quick, nervous and lacking in precision. The response of his antagonist, while equally prompt in the inception, was made with a slow, uniform, mechanical and, I thought, somewhat theatrical movement of the arm that was a sore trial to my patience. There was something unearthly about it all, and I caught myself shuddering. But I was wet and cold.

Two or three times after moving a piece the stranger slightly inclined his head, and each time I observed that Moxon shifted his king. All at once the thought came to me that the man was dumb. And then that he was a machine—an automaton chess-player! Then I remembered that Moxon had once spoken to me of having invented such a piece of mechanism, though I did not understand that it had actually been constructed. Was all his talk about the consciousness and intelligence of machines merely a prelude to eventual exhibition of this device—only a

trick to intensify the effect of its mechanical action upon me in my ignorance of its secret?

A fine end, this, of all my intellectual transports—my “endless variety and excitement of philosophic thought!” I was about to retire in disgust when something occurred to hold my curiosity. I observed a shrug of the thing’s great shoulders, as if it were irritated, and so natural was this—so entirely human—that in my new view of the matter it startled me. Nor was that all, for a moment later it struck the table sharply with its clenched hand. At that gesture Moxon seemed even more startled than I. He pushed his chair a little backward, as in alarm.

Presently Moxon, whose play it was, raised his hand high above the board, pounced upon one of his pieces like a sparrow hawk and with the exclamation “Checkmate!” rose quickly to his feet and stepped behind his chair. The automaton sat motionless.

The wind had now gone down, but I heard, at lessening intervals and progressively louder, the rumble and roll of thunder. In the pauses between I now became conscious of a low humming or buzzing which, like the thunder, grew momentarily louder and more distinct. It seemed to come from the body of the automaton, and was unmistakably a whirring of wheels. It gave me the impression of a disordered mechanism which had escaped the repressive and regulating action of some controlling part—an effect such as might be expected if a pawl should be jostled

from the teeth of a ratchet wheel. But before I had time for much conjecture as to its nature my attention was taken by the strange motions of the automaton itself. A slight but continuous convulsion appeared to have possession of it. In body and head it shook like a man with palsy or an ague chill, and the motion augmented every moment until the entire figure was in violent agitation. Suddenly it sprang to its feet and with a movement almost too quick for the eye to follow shot forward across table and chair, with both arms thrust forth to their full length—the posture and lunge of a diver. Moxon tried to throw himself backward out of reach, but he was too late: I saw the horrible thing's hands close upon his throat, his own clutch its wrists. Then the table was overturned, the candle thrown to the floor and extinguished, and all was black dark. But the noise of the struggle was dreadfully distinct, and most terrible of all were the raucous, squawking sounds made by the strangled man's efforts to breathe. Guided by the infernal hubbub, I sprang to the rescue of my friend, but had hardly taken a stride in the darkness when the whole room blazed with a blinding white light that burned into my brain and heart and memory a vivid picture of the combatants on the floor, Moxon underneath, his throat still in the clutch of those iron hands, his head forced backward, his eyes protruding, his mouth wide open and his tongue thrust out; and—horrible contrast!—upon the painted face of his assassin an expression of tranquil and profound thought, as in

the solution of a problem in chess! This I observed, then all was blackness and silence.

Three days later I recovered consciousness in a hospital. As the memory of that tragic night slowly evolved in my ailing brain I recognized in my attendant Moxon's confidential workman, Haley. Responding to a look he approached, smiling.

"Tell me about it," I managed to say, faintly—"all about it."

"Certainly," he said. "You were carried unconscious from a burning house—Moxon's. Nobody knows how you came to be there. You may have to do a little explaining. The origin of the fire is a bit mysterious, too. My own notion is that the house was struck by lightning."

"And Moxon?"

"Buried yesterday—what was left of him."

Apparently this reticent person could unfold himself on occasion. When imparting shocking intelligence to the sick he was affable enough. After some moments of the keenest mental suffering I ventured to ask another question:

"Who rescued me?"

"Well, if that interests you—I did."

"Thank you, Mr. Haley, and may God bless you for it. Did you rescue, also, that charming product of your skill, the automaton chess-player that murdered its inventor?"

The man was silent a long time, looking away from me. Presently he turned and gravely said:

Moxon's Master

“Do you know that?”

“I do,” I replied. “I saw it done.”

That was many years ago. If asked today I should answer less confidently.





A PSYCHOLOGICAL SHIPWRECK

In the summer of 1874, I was in Liverpool, whither I had gone on business for the mercantile house of Bronson & Jarrett, New York. I am William Jarrett. My partner was Zenas Bronson. The firm failed last year, and unable

to endure the fall from affluence to poverty, he died.

Having finished my business, and feeling the lassitude and exhaustion incident to its dispatch, I felt that a protracted sea voyage would be both agreeable and beneficial, so instead of embarking for my return on one of the many fine passenger steamers I booked for New York on the sailing vessel *Morrow*, upon which I had shipped a large and valuable invoice of the goods I had bought. The *Morrow* was an English ship with, of course, but little accommodation for passengers, of whom there were only myself, a young woman and her servant, who was a middle-aged Negress. I thought it singular that a traveling English girl should be so attended, but she afterward explained to me that the woman had been left with her family by a man and his wife from South Carolina, both of whom had died on the same day at the house of the young lady's father in Devonshire—a circumstance in itself sufficiently uncommon to remain rather distinctly in my memory, even had it not afterward transpired in conversation with the young lady that the name of the man was William Jarrett, the same as my own. I knew that a branch of my family had settled in South Carolina, but of them and their history I was ignorant.

The *Morrow* sailed from the mouth of the Mersey on the fifteenth of June, and for several weeks we had fair breezes and unclouded skies. The skipper, an admirable seaman but nothing more, favored us with very little of his society, except at his table; and the

young woman, Miss Janette Harford, and I became very well acquainted. We were, in truth, nearly always together, and being of an introspective turn of mind I often endeavored to analyze and define the novel feeling with which she inspired me—a secret, subtle, but powerful attraction which constantly impelled me to seek her; but the attempt was hopeless. I could only be sure that at least it was not love. Having assured myself of this and being certain that she was quite as wholehearted, I ventured one evening (I remember it was on the third of July) as we sat on deck to ask her, laughingly, if she could assist me to resolve my psychological doubt.

For a moment she was silent, with averted face, and I began to fear I had been extremely rude and indelicate; then she fixed her eyes gravely on my own. In an instant my mind was dominated by as strange a fancy as ever entered human consciousness. It seemed as if she were looking at me, not *with*, but *through*, those eyes—from an immeasurable distance behind them—and that a number of other persons, men, women and children, upon whose faces I caught strangely familiar evanescent expressions, clustered about her, struggling with gentle eagerness to look at me through the same orbs. Ship, ocean, sky—all had vanished. I was conscious of nothing but the figures in this extraordinary and fantastic scene. Then all at once darkness fell upon me, and anon from out of it, as to one who grows accustomed by degrees to a dimmer light, my former surroundings of deck and

mast and cordage slowly resolved themselves. Miss Harford had closed her eyes and was leaning back in her chair, apparently asleep, the book she had been reading open in her lap. Impelled by surely I cannot say what motive, I glanced at the top of the page; it was a copy of that rare and curious work, Denneker's *Meditations*,* and the lady's index finger rested on this passage:

"To sundry it is given to be drawn away, and to be apart from the body for a season; for, as concerning rills which would flow across each other the weaker is borne along by the stronger, so there be certain of kin whose paths intersecting, their souls do bear company, the while their bodies go foreappointed ways,* unknowing."

Miss Harford arose, shuddering; the sun had sunk below the horizon, but it was not cold. There was not a breath of wind; there were no clouds in the sky, yet not a star was visible. A hurried tramping sounded on the deck; the captain, summoned from below, joined the first officer, who stood looking at the barometer. "Good God!" I heard him exclaim.

An hour later the form of Janette Harford, invisible in the darkness and spray, was torn from my grasp by the cruel vortex of the sinking ship, and I fainted in the cordage of the floating mast to which I had lashed myself.

It was by lamplight that I awoke. I lay in a berth amid the familiar surroundings of the stateroom of a

steamer. On a couch opposite sat a man, half undressed for bed, reading a book. I recognized the face of my friend Gordon Doyle, whom I had met in Liverpool on the day of my embarkation, when he was himself about to sail on the steamer *City of Prague*, on which he had urged me to accompany him.

After some moments I now spoke his name. He simply said, "Well," and turned a leaf in his book without removing his eyes from the page.

"Doyle," I repeated, "did they save *her*?"

He now deigned to look at me and smiled as if amused. He evidently thought me but half awake.

"Her? Whom do you mean?"

"Janette Harford."

His amusement turned to amazement; he stared at me fixedly, saying nothing.

"You will tell me after a while," I continued. "I suppose you will tell me after a while."

A moment later I asked, "What ship is this?"

Doyle stared again. "The steamer *City of Prague*, bound from Liverpool to New York, three weeks out with a broken shaft. Principal passenger, Mr. Gordon Doyle; ditto lunatic, Mr. William Jarrett.* These two distinguished travelers embarked together, but they are about to part, it being the resolute intention of the former to pitch the latter overboard."

I sat bolt upright. "Do you mean to say that I have been for three weeks a passenger on this steamer?"

"Yes, pretty nearly. This is the third of July."

A Psychological Shipwreck

“Have I been ill?”

“Right as a trivet all the time, and punctual at your meals.”

“My God! Doyle, there is some mystery here. Do have the goodness to be serious. Was I not rescued from the wreck of the ship *Morrow*!”

Doyle changed color and, approaching me, laid his fingers on my wrist. A moment later, “What do you know of Janette Harford?” he asked very calmly.

“First tell me what *you* know of her?”

Mr. Doyle gazed at me for some moments as if thinking what to do, then seating himself again on the couch, said:

“Why should I not? I am engaged to marry Janette Harford, whom I met a year ago in London. Her family, one of the wealthiest in Devonshire, cut up rough about it, and we eloped—are eloping, rather, for on the day that you and I walked to the landing stage to go aboard this steamer she and her faithful servant, a Negress, passed us, driving to the ship *Morrow*. She would not consent to go in the same vessel with me, and it had been deemed best that she take a sailing vessel in order to avoid observation and lessen the risk of detection. I am now alarmed lest this cursed breaking of our machinery may detain us so long that the *Morrow* will get to New York before us, and the poor girl will not know where to go.”

I lay still in my berth—so still I hardly breathed. But the subject was evidently not displeasing to Doyle, and after a short pause he resumed:

"By the way, she is only an adopted daughter of the Harfords. Her mother was killed at their place by being thrown from a horse while hunting, and her father, mad with grief, made away with himself the same day. No one ever claimed the child, and after a reasonable time they adopted her. She has grown up in the belief that she is their daughter."

"Doyle, what book are you reading?"

"Oh, it's called Denneker's *Meditations*. It's a rum lot.* Janette gave it to me. She happened to have two copies. Want to see it?"

He tossed me the volume, which opened as it fell. On one of the exposed pages was a marked passage:

"To sundry it is given to be drawn away, and to be apart from the body for a season; for, as concerning rills which would flow across each other the weaker is borne along by the stronger, so there be certain of kin whose paths intersecting, their souls do bear company, the while their bodies go foreappointed ways, unknowing."

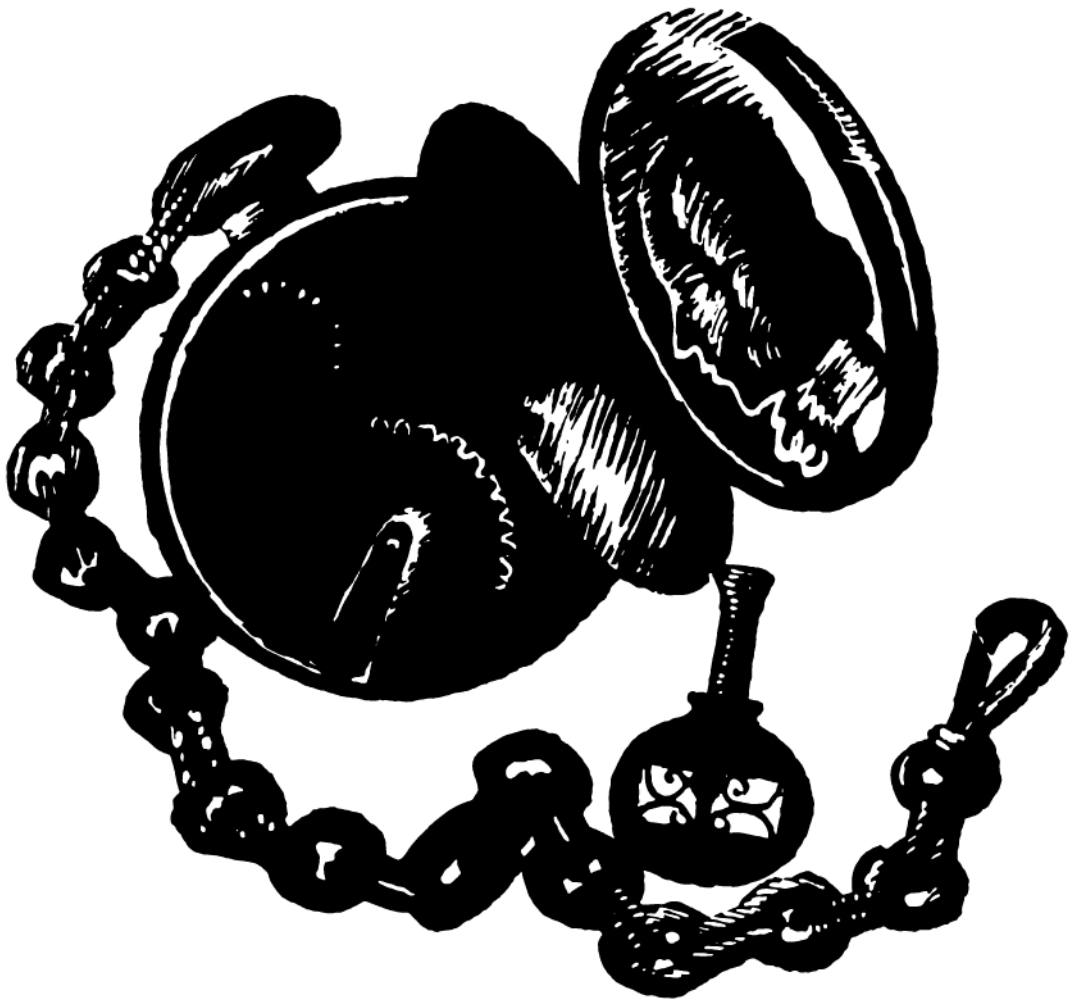
"She had—she has—a singular taste in reading," I managed to say, mastering my agitation.

"Yes. And now perhaps you will have the kindness to explain how you knew her name and that of the ship she sailed in."

"You talked of her in your sleep," I said.

A week later we were towed into the port of New York. But the *Morrow* was never heard from.





JOHN BARTINE'S WATCH

A Story by a Physician

“**T**he exact time? Good God! my friend, why do you insist? One would think—but what does it matter. It is easily bedtime—isn't that near enough? But, here, if you must set your watch, take mine and see for yourself.”

With that he detached his watch—a tremendously heavy, old-fashioned one—from the chain and handed it to me, then turned away, and walking across the room to a shelf of books, began an examination of their backs. His agitation and evident distress surprised me; they appeared reasonless. Having set my watch by his, I stepped over to where he stood and said, “Thank you.”

As he took his timepiece and reattached it to the guard I observed that his hands were unsteady. With a tact upon which I greatly prided myself, I sauntered carelessly to the sideboard and took some brandy and water, then, begging his pardon for my thoughtlessness, asked him to have some and went back to my seat by the fire, leaving him to help himself, as was our custom. He did so and presently joined me at the hearth, as tranquil as ever.

This odd little incident occurred in my apartment, where John Bartine was passing an evening. We had dined together at the club, had come home in a cab and—in short, everything had been done in the most prosaic way; and why John Bartine should break in upon the natural and established order of things to make himself spectacular with a display of emotion, apparently for his own entertainment, I could nowise understand. The more I thought of it, while his brilliant conversational gifts were commending themselves to my inattention,* the more curious I grew, and of course had no difficulty in persuading myself that my curiosity was friendly solicitude. That is the

disguise that curiosity usually assumes to evade resentment. So I ruined one of the finest sentences of his disregarded monologue by cutting it short without ceremony.

"John Bartine," I said, "you must try to forgive me if I am wrong, but with the light that I have at present I cannot concede your right to go all to pieces when asked the time o' night. I cannot admit that it is proper to experience a mysterious reluctance to look your own watch in the face and to cherish in my presence, without explanation, painful emotions which are denied to me, and which are none of my business."

To this ridiculous speech Bartine made no immediate reply, but sat looking gravely into the fire. Fearing that I had offended I was about to apologize and beg him to think no more about the matter, when looking me calmly in the eyes he said:

"My dear fellow, the levity of your manner does not at all disguise the hideous impudence of your demand; but happily I had already decided to tell you what you wish to know, and no manifestation of your unworthiness to hear it shall alter my decision. Be good enough to give me your attention and you shall hear all about the matter.

"This watch," he said, "had been in my family for three generations before it fell to me. Its original owner, for whom it was made, was my great-grandfather, Bramwell Olcott Bartine, a wealthy planter of Colonial Virginia, and as staunch a Tory as ever lay

awake nights contriving new kinds of maledictions for the head of Mr. Washington, and new methods of aiding and abetting good King George.* One day this worthy gentleman had the deep misfortune to perform for his cause a service of capital importance which was not recognized as legitimate by those who suffered its disadvantages. It does not matter what it was, but among its minor consequences was my excellent ancestor's arrest one night in his own house by a party of Mr. Washington's rebels. He was permitted to say farewell to his weeping family, and was then marched away into the darkness which swallowed him up forever. Not the slenderest clue to his fate was ever found. After the war the most diligent inquiry and the offer of large rewards failed to turn up any of his captors or any fact concerning his disappearance. He had disappeared, and that was all."

Something in Bartine's manner that was not in his words—I hardly knew what it was—prompted me to ask:

"What is your view of the matter—of the justice of it?"

"My view of it," he flamed out, bringing his clenched hand down upon the table as if he had been in a public house dicing with blackguards—"my view of it is that it was a characteristically dastardly assassination by that damned traitor, Washington, and his ragamuffin rebels!"

For some minutes nothing was said. Bartine was

recovering his temper, and I waited. Then I said:

“Was that all?”

“No—there was something else. A few weeks after my great-grandfather's arrest his watch was found lying on the porch at the front door of his dwelling. It was wrapped in a sheet of letter paper bearing the name of Rupert Bartine, his only son, my grandfather. I am wearing that watch.”

Bartine paused. His usually restless black eyes were staring fixedly into the grate, a point of red light in each, reflected from the glowing coals. He seemed to have forgotten me. A sudden threshing of the branches of a tree outside one of the windows, and almost at the same instant a rattle of rain against the glass, recalled him to a sense of his surroundings. A storm had risen, heralded by a single gust of wind, and in a few moments the steady plash of the water on the pavement was distinctly heard. I hardly know why I relate this incident; it seemed somehow to have a certain significance and relevancy which I am unable now to discern. It at least added an element of seriousness, almost solemnity. Bartine resumed:

“I have a singular feeling toward this watch—a kind of affection for it. I like to have it about me, though partly from its weight, and partly for a reason I shall now explain, I seldom carry it. The reason is this: Every evening when I have it with me I feel an unaccountable desire to open and consult it, even if I can think of no reason for wishing to know the time. But if I yield to it, the moment my eyes rest upon the

dial I am filled with a mysterious apprehension—a sense of imminent calamity. And this is the more insupportable the nearer it is to eleven o'clock—by this watch, no matter what the actual hour may be. After the hands have registered eleven the desire to look is gone; I am entirely indifferent. Then I can consult the thing as often as I like, with no more emotion than you feel in looking at your own. Naturally I have trained myself not to look at that watch in the evening before eleven; nothing could induce me. Your insistence this evening upset me a trifle. I felt very much as I suppose an opium-eater might feel if his yearning for his special and particular kind of hell were reinforced by opportunity and advice.

“Now that is my story, and I have told it in the interest of your trumpery science; but if on any evening hereafter you observe me wearing this damnable watch, and you have the thoughtfulness to ask me the hour, I shall beg leave to put you to the inconvenience of being knocked down.”

His humor did not amuse me. I could see that in relating his delusion he was again somewhat disturbed. His concluding smile was positively ghastly, and his eyes had resumed something more than their old restlessness; they shifted hither and thither about the room with apparent aimlessness and I fancied had taken on a wild expression, such as is sometimes observed in cases of dementia. Perhaps this was my own imagination, but at any rate I was now

persuaded that my friend was afflicted with a most singular and interesting monomania.* Without, I trust, any abatement of my affectionate solicitude for him as a friend, I began to regard him as a patient, rich in possibilities of profitable study. Why not? Had he not described his delusion in the interest of science? Ah, poor fellow, he was doing more for science than he knew: not only his story but himself was in evidence. I should cure him if I could, of course, but first I should make a little experiment in psychology—nay, the experiment itself might be a step in his restoration.

“That is very frank and friendly of you, Bartine,” I said cordially, “and I’m rather proud of your confidence. It is all very odd, certainly. Do you mind showing me the watch?”

He detached it from his waistcoat, chain and all, and passed it to me without a word. The case was of gold, very thick and strong, and singularly engraved. After closely examining the dial and observing that it was nearly twelve o’clock, I opened it at the back and was interested to observe an inner case of ivory, upon which was painted a miniature portrait in that exquisite and delicate manner which was in vogue during the eighteenth century.

“Why, bless my soul!” I exclaimed, feeling a sharp artistic delight—“how under the sun did you get that done? I thought miniature painting on ivory was a lost art.”

“That,” he replied, gravely smiling, “is not I. It is

my excellent great-grandfather, the late Bramwell Olcott Bartine, Esquire, of Virginia. He was younger then than later—about my age, in fact. It is said to resemble me. Do you think so?”

“Resemble you? I should say so! Barring the costume, which I supposed you to have assumed out of compliment to the art—or for *vraisemblance*,* so to say—and the no mustache, that portrait is you in every feature, line, and expression.”

No more was said at that time. Bartine took a book from the table and began reading. I heard outside the incessant plash of the rain in the street. There were occasional hurried footfalls on the sidewalks; and once a slower, heavier tread seemed to cease at my door—a policeman, I thought, seeking shelter in the doorway. The boughs of the trees tapped significantly on the windowpanes, as if asking for admittance. I remember it all through these years and years of a wiser, graver life.

Seeing myself unobserved, I took the old-fashioned key that dangled from the chain and quickly turned back the hands of the watch a full hour; then, closing the case, I handed Bartine his property and saw him replace it on his person.

“I think you said,” I began, with assumed carelessness, “that after eleven the sight of the dial no longer affects you. As it is now nearly twelve”—looking at my own timepiece—“perhaps, if you don’t resent my pursuit of proof, you will look at it now.”

He smiled good-humoredly, pulled out the watch

again, opened it, and instantly sprang to his feet with a cry that Heaven has not had the mercy to permit me to forget! His eyes, their blackness strikingly intensified by the pallor of his face, were fixed upon the watch, which he clutched in both hands. For some time he remained in that attitude without uttering another sound; then, in a voice that I should not have recognized as his, he said:

“Damn you! It is two minutes to eleven!”

I was not unprepared for some such outbreak, and without rising replied, calmly enough:

“I beg your pardon. I must have misread your watch in setting my own by it.”

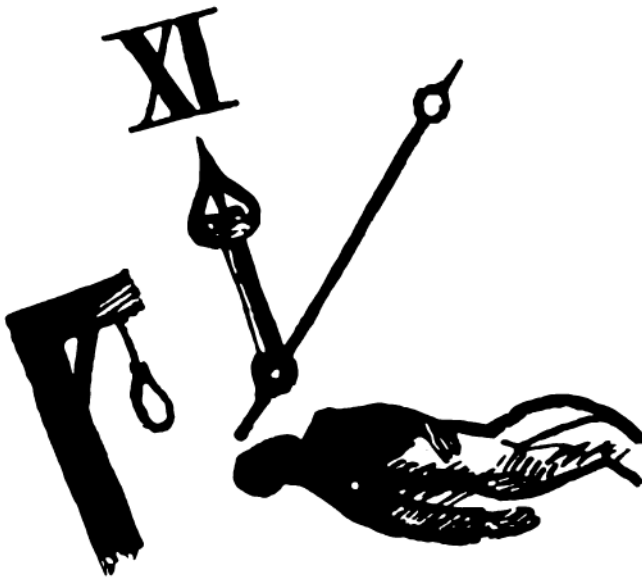
He shut the case with a sharp snap and put the watch in his pocket. He looked at me and made an attempt to smile, but his lower lip quivered and he seemed unable to close his mouth. His hands, also, were shaking, and he thrust them, clenched, into the pockets of his sack coat. The courageous spirit was manifestly endeavoring to subdue the coward body. The effort was too great; he began to sway from side to side, as from vertigo, and before I could spring from my chair to support him his knees gave way and he pitched awkwardly forward and fell upon his face. I sprang to assist him to rise; but when John Bartine rises we shall all rise.*

The postmortem examination disclosed nothing; every organ was normal and sound. But when the body had been prepared for burial a faint dark circle was seen to have developed around the neck; at least

I was so assured by several persons who said they saw it, but of my own knowledge I cannot say if that was true.

Nor can I set limitations to the law of heredity. I do not know that in the spiritual world a sentiment or emotion may not survive the heart that held it, and seek expression in a kindred life, ages removed. Surely, if I were to guess at the fate of Bramwell Olcott Bartine, I should guess that he was hanged at eleven o'clock in the evening, and that he had been allowed several hours in which to prepare for the change.

As to John Bartine, my friend, my patient for five minutes, and—Heaven forgive me!—my victim for eternity, there is no more to say. He is buried, and his watch with him—I saw to that. May God rest his soul in Paradise, and the soul of his Virginian ancestor, if, indeed, they are two souls.





THE DAMNED THING

I

One does not Always Eat What is on the Table



y the light of a tallow candle which had been placed on one end of a rough table a man was reading something written in a book. It was an old account book, greatly worn; and the writing was not,

apparently, very legible, for the man sometimes held the page close to the flame of the candle to get a stronger light on it. The shadow of the book would then throw into obscurity a half of the room, darkening a number of faces and figures; for besides the reader, eight other men were present. Seven of them sat against the rough log walls, silent, motionless, and the room being small, not very far from the table. By extending an arm any one of them could have touched the eighth man, who lay on the table, face upward, partly covered by a sheet, his arms at his sides. He was dead.

The man with the book was not reading aloud, and no one spoke. All seemed to be waiting for something to occur; the dead man only was without expectation. From the blank darkness outside came in, through the aperture that served for a window, all the ever unfamiliar noises of night in the wilderness—the long nameless note of a distant coyote; the stilly pulsing trill of tireless insects in trees; strange cries of night birds, so different from those of the birds of day; the drone of great blundering beetles, and all that mysterious chorus of small sounds that seem always to have been but half heard when they have suddenly ceased, as if conscious of an indiscretion. But nothing of all this was noted in that company; its members were not overmuch addicted to idle interest in matters of no practical importance; that was obvious in every line of their rugged faces—obvious even in the dim light of the single candle. They were evidently

men of the vicinity—farmers and woodsmen.

The person reading was a trifle different; one would have said of him that he was of the world, worldly, albeit there was that in his attire which attested a certain fellowship with the organisms of his environment. His coat would hardly have passed muster* in San Francisco; his footgear was not of urban origin, and the hat that lay by him on the floor (he was the only one uncovered) was such that if one had considered it as an article of mere personal adornment he would have missed its meaning. In countenance the man was rather prepossessing, with just a hint of sternness; though that he may have assumed or cultivated, as appropriate to one in authority. For he was a coroner. It was by virtue of his office that he had possession of the book in which he was reading. It had been found among the dead man's effects—in his cabin, where the inquest was now taking place.

When the coroner had finished reading he put the book into his breast pocket. At that moment the door was pushed open and a young man entered. He, clearly, was not of mountain birth and breeding: he was clad as those who dwell in cities. His clothing was dusty, however, as from travel. He had, in fact, been riding hard to attend the inquest.

The coroner nodded. No one else greeted him.

"We have waited for you," said the coroner. "It is necessary to have done with this business tonight."

The young man smiled. "I am sorry to have kept

you," he said. "I went away, not to evade your summons, but to post to my newspaper an account of what I suppose I am called back to relate."

The coroner smiled.

"The account that you posted to your newspaper," he said, "differs, probably, from that which you will give here under oath."

"That," replied the other, rather hotly and with a visible flush, "is as you please. I used manifold paper* and have a copy of what I sent. It was not written as news, for it is incredible, but as fiction. It may go as a part of my testimony under oath."

"But you say it is incredible."

"That is nothing to you, sir, if I also swear that it is true."

The coroner was silent for a time, his eyes upon the floor. The men about the sides of the cabin talked in whispers, but seldom withdrew their gaze from the face of the corpse. Presently the coroner lifted his eyes and said, "We will resume the inquest."

The men removed their hats. The witness was sworn.

"What is your name?" the coroner asked.

"William Harker."

"Age?"

"Twenty-seven."

"You knew the deceased, Hugh Morgan?"

"Yes."

"You were with him when he died?"

"Near him."

"How did that happen—your presence, I mean?"

"I was visiting him at this place to shoot and fish. A part of my purpose, however, was to study him and his odd, solitary way of life. He seemed a good model for a character in fiction. I sometimes write stories."

"I sometimes read them."

"Thank you."

"Stories in general—not yours."

Some of the jurors laughed. Against a somber background humor shows high lights. Soldiers in the intervals of battle laugh easily, and a jest in the death chamber conquers by surprise.

"Relate the circumstances of this man's death," said the coroner. "You may use any notes or memoranda that you please."

The witness understood. Pulling a manuscript from his breast pocket he held it near the candle and turning the leaves until he found the passage that he wanted began to read.

II

What May Happen in a Field of Wild Oats

"...The sun had hardly risen when we left the house. We were looking for quail, each with a shotgun, but we had only one dog. Morgan said that our best ground was beyond a certain ridge that he pointed out, and we crossed it by a trail through the chaparral. On the other side was comparatively level

ground, thickly covered with wild oats. As we emerged from the chaparral Morgan was but a few yards in advance. Suddenly we heard, at a little distance to our right and partly in front, a noise as of some animal thrashing about in the bushes, which we could see were violently agitated.

“ ‘We’ve started a deer,’ I said. ‘I wish we had brought a rifle.’ ”

“Morgan, who had stopped and was intently watching the agitated chaparral, said nothing, but had cocked both barrels of his gun and was holding it in readiness to aim. I thought him a trifle excited, which surprised me, for he had a reputation for exceptional coolness, even in moments of sudden and imminent peril.

“ ‘O, come,’ I said. ‘You are not going to fill up a deer with quail-shot, are you?’ ”

“Still he did not reply, but catching a sight of his face as he turned it slightly toward me I was struck by the intensity of his look. Then I understood that we had serious business in hand, and my first conjecture was that we had jumped a grizzly. I advanced to Morgan’s side, cocking my piece as I moved.

“The bushes were now quiet and the sounds had ceased, but Morgan was as attentive to the place as before.

“ ‘What is it? What the devil is it?’ I asked.

“ ‘That Damned Thing!’ he replied, without turning his head. His voice was husky and unnatural. He trembled visibly

“I was about to speak further, when I observed the wild oats near the place of the disturbance moving in the most inexplicable way. I can hardly describe it. It seemed as if stirred by a streak of wind, which not only bent it, but pressed it down—crushed it so that it did not rise—and this movement was slowly prolonging itself directly toward us.

“Nothing that I had ever seen had affected me so strangely as this unfamiliar and unaccountable phenomenon, yet I am unable to recall any sense of fear. I remember—and tell it here because, singularly enough, I recollected it then—that once in looking carelessly out of an open window I momentarily mistook a small tree close at hand for one of a group of larger trees at a little distance away. It looked the same size as the others, but being more distinctly and sharply defined in mass and detail seemed out of harmony with them. It was a mere falsification of the law of aerial perspective, but it startled, almost terrified me. We so rely upon the orderly operation of familiar natural laws that any seeming suspension of them is noted as a menace to our safety, a warning of unthinkable calamity. So now the apparently causeless movement of the herbage and the slow, undeviating approach of the line of disturbance were distinctly disquieting. My companion appeared actually frightened, and I could hardly credit my senses when I saw him suddenly throw his gun to his shoulder and fire both barrels at the agitated grain! Before the smoke of the discharge had cleared away I heard a

loud savage cry—a scream like that of a wild animal—and flinging his gun upon the ground Morgan sprang away and ran swiftly from the spot. At the same instant I was thrown violently to the ground by the impact of something unseen in the smoke—some soft, heavy substance that seemed thrown against me with great force.

“Before I could get upon my feet and recover my gun, which seemed to have been struck from my hands, I heard Morgan crying out as if in mortal agony, and mingling with his cries were such hoarse, savage sounds as one hears from fighting dogs. Inexpressibly terrified, I struggled to my feet and looked in the direction of Morgan’s retreat—and may Heaven in mercy spare me from another sight like that! At a distance of less than thirty yards was my friend, down upon one knee, his head thrown back at a frightful angle, hatless, his long hair in disorder and his whole body in violent movement from side to side, backward and forward. His right arm was lifted and seemed to lack the hand—at least, I could see none. The other arm was invisible. At times, as my memory now reports this extraordinary scene, I could discern but a part of his body. It was as if he had been partly blotted out—I cannot otherwise express it—then a shifting of his position would bring it all into view again.

“All this must have occurred within a few seconds, yet in that time Morgan assumed all the postures of a determined wrestler vanquished by

superior weight and strength. I saw nothing but him, and him not always distinctly. During the entire incident his shouts and curses were heard, as if through an enveloping uproar of such sounds of rage and fury as I had never heard from the throat of man or brute!

“For a moment only I stood irresolute, then throwing down my gun I ran forward to my friend’s assistance. I had a vague belief that he was suffering from a fit, or some form of convulsion. Before I could reach his side he was down and quiet. All sounds had ceased, but with a feeling of such terror as even these awful events had not inspired I now saw again the mysterious movement of the wild oats, prolonging itself from the trampled area about the prostrate man toward the edge of a wood. It was only when it had reached the wood that I was able to withdraw my eyes and look at my companion. He was dead.”

III

A Man though Naked May be in Rags

The coroner rose from his seat and stood beside the dead man. Lifting an edge of the sheet he pulled it away, exposing the entire body, altogether naked and showing in the candlelight a claylike yellow. It had, however, broad maculations of bluish black, obviously caused by extravasated blood* from contusions. The chest and sides looked as if they had been

beaten with a bludgeon. There were dreadful lacerations; the skin was torn in strips and shreds.

The coroner moved round to the end of the table and undid a silk handkerchief which had been passed under the chin and knotted on the top of the head. When the handkerchief was drawn away it exposed what had been the throat. Some of the jurors who had risen to get a better view repented their curiosity and turned away their faces. Witness Harker went to the open window and leaned out across the sill, faint and sick. Dropping the handkerchief upon the dead man's neck the coroner stepped to an angle of the room and from a pile of clotching produced one garment after another, each of which he held up a moment for inspection. All were torn, and stiff with blood. The jurors did not make a closer inspection. They seemed rather uninterested. They had, in truth, seen all this before, the only thing that was new to them being Harker's testimony.

"Gentlemen," the coroner said, "we have no more evidence, I think. Your duty has been already explained to you. If there is nothing you wish to ask you may go outside and consider your verdict."

The foreman rose—a tall, bearded man of sixty, coarsely clad.

"I should like to ask one question, Mr. Coroner," he said. "What asylum did this yer* last witness escape from?"

"Mr. Harker," said the coroner, gravely and tranquilly, "from what asylum did you last escape?"

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Harker flushed crimson again, but said nothing, and the seven jurors rose and solemnly filed out of the cabin.

"If you have done insulting me, sir," said Harker, as soon as he and the officer were left alone with the dead man, "I suppose I am at liberty to go?"

"Yes."

Harker started to leave, but paused, with his hand on the door latch. The habit of his profession was strong in him—stronger than his sense of personal dignity. He turned about and said:

"The book that you have there—I recognize it as Morgan's diary. You seemed greatly interested in it; you read in it while I was testifying. May I see it? The public would like——"

"The book will cut no figure in this matter,"* replied the official, slipping it into his coat pocket. "All the entries in it were made before the writer's death."

As Harker passed out of the house the jury reentered and stood about the table, on which the now covered corpse showed under the sheet with sharp definition. The foreman seated himself near the candle, produced from his breast pocket a pencil and scrap of paper and wrote rather laboriously the following verdict, which with various degrees of effort all signed:

"We, the jury, do find that the remains come to their death at the hands of a mountain lion, but some of us thinks, all the same, they had fits."

IV

An Explanation from the Tomb

In the diary of the late Hugh Morgan are certain interesting entries having, possibly, a scientific value as suggestions. At the inquest upon his body the book was not put in evidence; possibly the coroner thought it not worthwhile to confuse the jury. The date of the first of the entries mentioned cannot be ascertained; the upper part of the leaf is torn away. The part of the entry remaining follows:

“...would run in a half-circle, keeping his head turned always toward the center, and again he would stand still, barking furiously. At last he ran away into the brush as fast as he could go. I thought at first that he had gone mad, but on returning to the house found no other alteration in his manner than what was obviously due to fear of punishment.

“Can a dog see with his nose? Do odors impress some cerebral center with images of the thing that emitted them?...

“Sept. 2—Looking at the stars last night as they rose above the crest of the ridge east of the house, I observed them successively disappear—from left to right. Each was eclipsed but an instant, and only a few at the same time, but along the entire length of the ridge all that were within a degree or two of the crest were blotted out. It was as if something had passed along between me and them; but I could not

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see it, and the stars were not thick enough to define its outline. Ugh! I don't like this."

Several weeks' entries are missing, three leaves being torn from the book.

"Sept. 27—It has been about here again—I find evidences of its presence every day. I watched again all last night in the same cover, gun in hand, double-charged with buckshot. In the morning the fresh footprints were there, as before. Yet I would have sworn that I did not sleep—indeed, I hardly sleep at all. It is terrible, insupportable! If these amazing experiences are real I shall go mad; if they are fanciful I am mad already.

"Oct. 3—I shall not go—it shall not drive me away. No, this is *my* house, *my* land. God hates a coward....

"Oct. 5—I can stand it no longer; I have invited Harker to pass a few weeks with me—he has a level head, I can judge from his manner if he thinks me mad.

"Oct. 7—I have the solution of the mystery; it came to me last night—suddenly, as by revelation. How simple—how terribly simple!

"There are sounds that we cannot hear. At either end of the scale are notes that stir no chord of that imperfect instrument, the human ear. They are too high or too grave. I have observed a flock of black-birds occupying an entire treetop—the tops of several trees—and all in full song. Suddenly—in a moment—at absolutely the same instant—all spring

into the air and fly away. How? They could not all see one another—whole treetops intervened. At no point could a leader have been visible to all. There must have been a signal of warning or command, high and shrill above the din, but by me unheard. I have observed, too, the same simultaneous flight when all were silent, among not only blackbirds, but other birds—quail, for example, widely separated by bushes—even on opposite sides of a hill.

“It is known to seamen that a school of whales basking or sporting on the surface of the ocean, miles apart, with the convexity of the earth between, will sometimes dive at the same instant—all gone out of sight in a moment. The signal has been sounded—to grave for the ear of the sailor at the masthead and his comrades on the deck—who nevertheless feel its vibrations in the ship as the stones of a cathedral are stirred by the bass of the organ.

“As with sounds, so with colors. At each end of the solar spectrum the chemist can detect the presence of what are known as actinic rays. They represent colors—integral colors in the composition of light—which we are unable to discern. The human eye is an imperfect instrument; its range is but a few octaves of the real chromatic scale. I am not mad; there are colors that we cannot see.

“And, God help me! the Damned Things is of such a color!”





A

man stepped out of the darkness into the little illuminated circle about our failing campfire and seated himself upon a rock.

“You are not the first to explore this region,” he said, gravely.

Nobody controverted his statement; he was himself proof of its truth, for he was not of our party and must have been somewhere near when we camped. Moreover, he must have companions not far away; it was not a place where one would be living or traveling alone. For more than a week we had seen, besides ourselves and our animals, only such living things as rattlesnakes and horned toads. In an Arizona desert one does not coexist with only such creatures as these: one must have pack animals, supplies, arms—"an outfit." And all these imply comrades. It was perhaps a doubt as to what manner of men this unceremonious stranger's comrades might be, together with something in his words interpretable as a challenge, that caused every man of our half-dozen "gentlemen adventurers" to rise to a sitting posture and lay his hand upon a weapon—an act signifying, in that time and place, a policy of expectation. The stranger gave the matter no attention and began again to speak in the same deliberate, uninflected monotone in which he had delivered his first sentence.

"Thirty years ago Ramon Gallegos, William Shaw, George W. Kent and Berry Davis, all of Tucson, crossed the Santa Catalina mountains and traveled due west, as nearly as the configuration of the country permitted. We were prospecting and it was our intention, if we found nothing, to push through to the Gila River at some point near Big Bend, where we understood there was a settlement. We had

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a good outfit but no guide—just Ramon Gallegos, William Shaw, George W. Kent and Berry Davis.”

The man repeated the names slowly and distinctly, as if to fix them in the memories of his audience, every member of which was now attentively observing him, but with a slackened apprehension regarding his possible companions somewhere in the darkness that seemed to enclose us like a black wall; in the manner of this volunteer historian was no suggestion of an unfriendly purpose. His act was rather that of a harmless lunatic than an enemy. We were not so new to the country as not to know that the solitary life of many a plainsman had a tendency to develop eccentricities of conduct and character not always easily distinguishable from mental aberration. A man is like a tree: in a forest of his fellows he will grow as straight as his generic and individual nature permits; alone in the open, he yields to the deforming stresses and tortions* that environ him. Some such thoughts were in my mind as I watched the man from the shadow of my hat, pulled low to shut out the firelight. A witless fellow, no doubt, but what could he be doing there in the heart of a desert?

Having undertaken to tell this story, I wish that I could describe the man's appearance; that would be a natural thing to do. Unfortunately, and somewhat strangely, I find myself unable to do so with any degree of confidence, for afterward no two of us agreed as to what he wore and how he looked; and

when I try to set down my own impressions they elude me. Anyone can tell some kind of story; narration is one of the elemental powers of the race. But the talent for description is a gift.

Nobody having broken silence the visitor went on to say:

“This country was not then what it is now. There was not a ranch between the Gila and the Gulf.* There was a little game here and there in the mountains, and near the infrequent water holes grass enough to keep our animals from starvation. If we should be so fortunate as to encounter no Indians we might get through. But within a week the purpose of the expedition had altered from discovery of wealth to preservation of life. We had gone too far to go back, for what was ahead could be no worse than what was behind; so we pushed on, riding by night to avoid Indians and the intolerable heat, and concealing ourselves by day as best we could. Sometimes, having exhausted our supply of wild meat and emptied our casks, we were days without food or drink; then a water hole or a shallow pool in the bottom of an arroyo* so restored our strength and sanity that we were able to shoot some of the wild animals that sought it also. Sometimes it was a bear, sometimes an antelope, a coyote, a cougar—that was as God pleased; all were food.

“One morning as we skirted a mountain range, seeking a practicable pass, we were attacked by a band of Apaches* who had followed our trail up a

gulch—it is not far from here. Knowing that they outnumbered us ten to one, they took none of their usual cowardly precautions, but dashed upon us at a gallop, firing and yelling. Fighting was out of the question. We urged our feeble animals up the gulch as far as there was footing for a hoof, then threw ourselves out of our saddles and took to the chaparral on one of the slopes, abandoning our entire outfit to the enemy. But we retained our rifles, every man—Ramon Gallegos, William Shaw, George W. Kent and Berry Davis.”

“Same old crowd,” said the humorist of our party. He was an Eastern man, unfamiliar with the decent observances of social intercourse. A gesture of disapproval from our leader silenced him and the stranger proceeded with his tale.

“The savages dismounted also, and some of them ran up the gulch beyond the point at which we had left it, cutting off further retreat in that direction and forcing us on up the side. Unfortunately the chaparral extended only a short distance up the slope, and as we came into the open ground above we took the fire of a dozen rifles; but Apaches shoot badly when in a hurry, and God so willed it that none of us fell. Twenty yards up the slope, beyond the edge of the brush, were vertical cliffs, in which, directly in front of us, was a narrow opening. Into that we ran, finding ourselves in a cavern about as large as an ordinary room in a house. Here for a time we were safe: a single man with a repeating rifle could defend the

entrance against all the Apaches in the land. But against hunger and thirst we had no defense. Courage we still had, but hope was a memory.

“Not one of those Indians did we afterward see, but by the smoke and glare of their fires in the gulch we knew that by day and by night they watched with ready rifles in the edge of the bush—knew that if we made a sortie not a man of us would live to take three steps into the open. For three days, watching in turn, we held out before our suffering became insupportable. Then—it was the morning of the fourth day—Ramon Gallegos said:

“ ‘Señores, I know not well* of the good God and what please him. I have live without religion, and I am not acquaint with that of you. Pardon, señores, if I shock you, but for me the time is come to beat the game of the Apache.*’

“He knelt upon the rock floor of the cave and pressed his pistol against his temple. ‘Madre de Dios,’* he said, ‘comes now the soul of Ramon Gallegos.’

“And so he left us—William Shaw, George W. Kent and Berry Davis.

“I was the leader. It was for me to speak.

“ ‘He was a brave man,’ I said—‘he knew when to die, and how. It is foolish to go mad from thirst and fall by Apache bullets, or be skinned alive—it is in bad taste. Let us join Ramon Gallegos.’

“ ‘That is right,’ said William Shaw.

“ ‘That is right,’ said George W. Kent.

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"I straightened the limbs of Ramon Gallegos and put a handkerchief over his face. Then William Shaw said: 'I should like to look like that—a little while.'

"And George W. Kent said that he felt that way, too.

" 'It shall be so,' I said. 'The red devils will wait a week. William Shaw and George W. Kent, draw and kneel.'

"They did so and I stood before them.

" 'Almighty God, our Father,' said I.

" 'Almighty God, our Father,' said William Shaw.

" 'Almighty God, our Father,' said George W. Kent.

" 'Forgive us our sins,' said I.

" 'Forgive us our sins,' said they.

" 'And receive our souls.'

" 'And receive our souls.'

" 'Amen!'

" 'Amen!'

"I laid them beside Ramon Gallegos and covered their faces."

There was a quick commotion on the opposite side of the campfire. One of our party had sprung to his feet, pistol in hand.

"And you!" he shouted. *You* dared to escape? You dare to be alive? You cowardly hound, I'll send you to join them if I hang for it!"

But with the leap of a panther the captain was upon him, grasping his wrist. "Hold it in, Sam Yountsey, hold it in!"

We were now all upon our feet—except the stranger, who sat motionless and apparently inattentive. Someone seized Yountsey's other arm.

"Captain," I said, "there is something wrong here. This fellow is either a lunatic or merely a liar—just a plain, everyday liar whom Yountsey has no call to kill. If this man was of that party it had five members, one of whom—probably himself—he has not named."

"Yes," said the captain, releasing the insurgent, who sat down, "there is something—unusual. Years ago four dead bodies of white men, scalped and shamefully mutilated, were found about the mouth of that cave. They are buried there. I have seen the graves—we shall all see them to-morrow."

The stranger rose, standing tall in the light of the expiring fire, which in our breathless attention to his story we had neglected to keep going.

"There were four," he said. "Ramon Gallegos, William Shaw, George W. Kent and Berry Davis."

With this reiterated roll call of the dead he walked into the darkness and we saw him no more.

At that moment one of our party, who had been on guard, strode in among us, rifle in hand and somewhat excited.

"Captain," he said, "for the last half-hour three men have been standing out there on the mesa." He pointed in the direction taken by the stranger. "I could see them distinctly, for the moon is up, but as they had no guns and I had them covered with mine

I thought it was their move. They have made none, but, damn it! they have got on to my nerves."

"Go back to your post, and stay till you see them again," said the captain. "The rest of you lie down again, or I'll kick you all into the fire."

The sentinel obediently withdrew, swearing, and did not return. As we were arranging our blankets the fiery Yountsey said, "I beg your pardon, Captain, but who the devil do you take them to be?"

"Ramon Gallegos, William Shaw and George W. Kent."

"But how about Berry Davis? I ought to have shot him."

"Quite needless. You couldn't have made him any deader. Go to sleep."





A WIRELESS MESSAGE

n the summer of 1896 Mr. William Holt, a wealthy manufacturer of Chicago, was living temporarily in a little town of central New York, the name of which the writer's memory has not retained. Mr. Holt had

A Wireless Message

had "trouble with his wife," from whom he had parted a year before. Whether the trouble was anything more serious than incompatibility of temper, he is probably the only living person that knows: he is not addicted to the vice of confidences. Yet he has related the incident herein set down to at least one person without exacting a pledge of secrecy. He is now living in Europe.

One evening he had left the house of a brother whom he was visiting, for a stroll in the country. It may be assumed—whatever the value of the assumption in connection with what is said to have occurred—that his mind was occupied with reflections on his domestic infelicities and the distressing changes that they had wrought in his life. Whatever may have been his thoughts, they so possessed him that he observed neither the lapse of time nor whither his feet were carrying him; he knew only that he had passed far beyond the town limits and was traversing a lonely region by a road that bore no resemblance to the one by which he had left the village. In brief, he was lost.

Realizing his mischance, he smiled; central New York is not a region of perils, nor does one long remain lost in it. He turned about and went back the way that he had come. Before he had gone far he observed that the landscape was growing more distinct—was brightening. Everything was suffused with a soft, red glow in which he saw his shadow projected

in the road before him. "The moon is rising," he said to himself. Then he remembered that it was about the time of the new moon, and if that tricky orb was in one of its stages of visibility it had set long before. He stopped and faced about, seeking the source of the rapidly broadening light. As he did so, his shadow turned and lay along the road in front of him as before. The light still came from behind him. That was surprising; he could not understand. Again he turned, and again, facing successively to every point of the horizon. Always the shadow was before—always the light behind, "a still and awful red."

Holt was astonished—"dumfounded"* is the word that he used in telling it—yet seems to have retained a certain intelligent curiosity. To test the intensity of the light whose nature and cause he could not determine, he took out his watch to see if he could make out the figures on the dial. They were plainly visible, and the hands indicated the hour of eleven o'clock and twenty-five minutes. At that moment the mysterious illumination suddenly flared to an intense, an almost blinding splendor, flushing the entire sky, extinguishing the stars and throwing the monstrous shadow of himself athwart the landscape. In that unearthly illumination he saw near him, but apparently in the air at a considerable elevation, the figure of his wife, clad in her night clothing and holding to her breast the figure of his child. Her eyes were fixed upon his with an expression which he

A Wireless Message

afterward professed himself unable to name or describe, further than that it was "not of this life."

The flare was momentary, followed by black darkness, in which, however, the apparition still showed white and motionless; then by insensible degrees it faded and vanished, like a bright image on the retina after the closing of the eyes. A peculiarity of the apparition, hardly noted at the time, but afterward recalled, was that it showed only the upper half of the woman's figure: nothing was seen below the waist.

The sudden darkness was comparative, not absolute, for gradually all objects of his environment became again visible.

In the dawn of the morning Holt found himself entering the village at a point opposite to that at which he had left it. He soon arrived at the house of his brother, who hardly knew him. He was wild-eyed, haggard, and gray as a rat. Almost incoherently, he related his night's experience.

"Go to bed, my poor fellow," said his brother, "and—wait. We shall hear more of this."

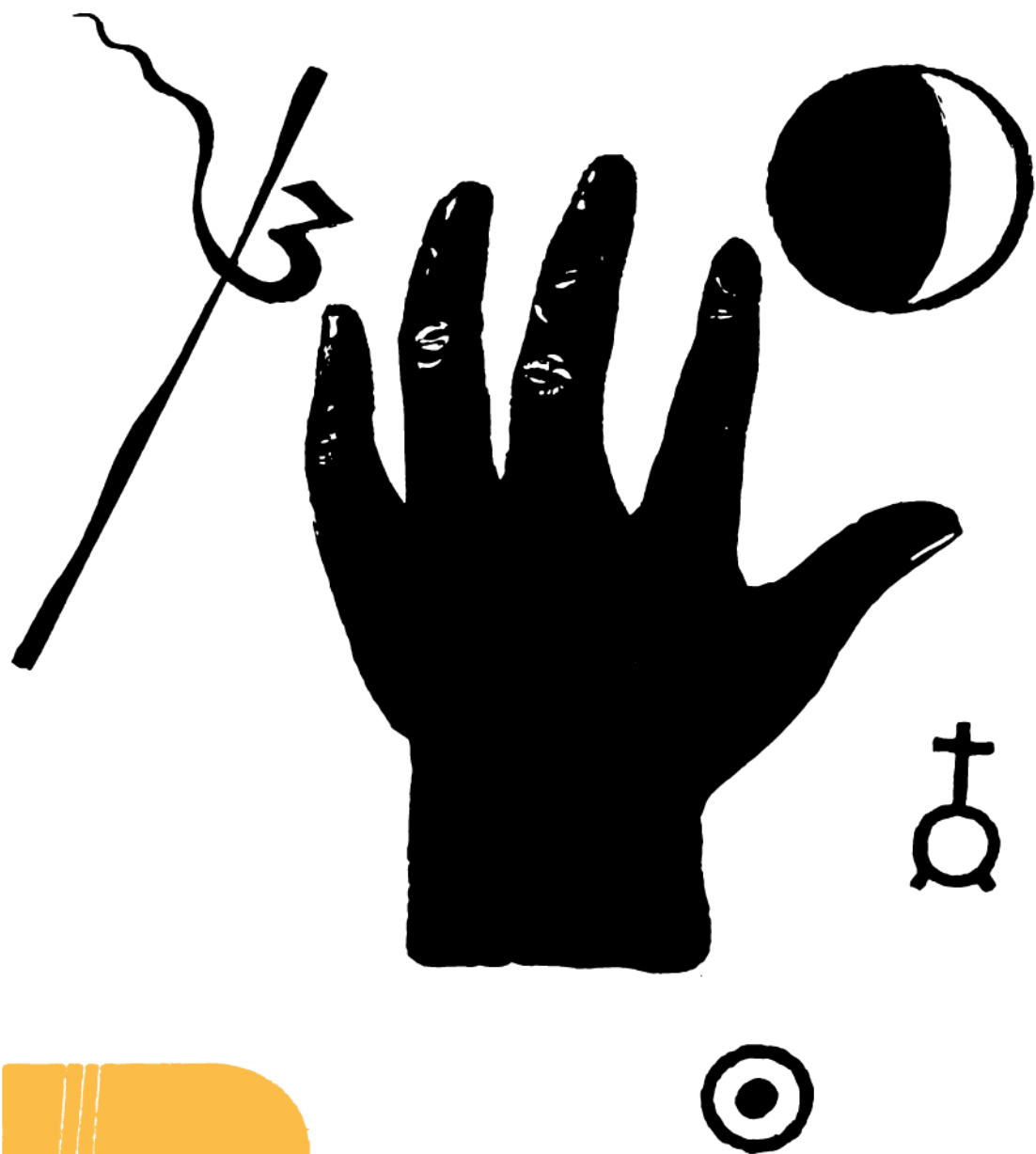
An hour later came the predestined telegram. Holt's dwelling in one of the suburbs of Chicago had been destroyed by fire. Her escape cut off by the flames, his wife had appeared at an upper window, her child in her arms. There she had stood, motionless, apparently dazed. Just as the firemen had

Ambrose BIERCE

arrived with a ladder, the floor had given way, and she was seen no more.

The moment of this culminating horror was eleven o'clock and twenty-five minutes, standard time.





B

THE HYPNOTIST

y those of my friends who happen to know that I sometimes amuse myself with hypnotism, mind reading and kindred phenomena, I am frequently asked if I have a clear conception of the nature of whatever principle

underlies them. To this question I always reply that I neither have nor desire to have. I am no investigator with an ear at the keyhole of Nature's workshop, trying with vulgar curiosity to steal the secrets of her trade. The interests of science are as little to me as mine seem to have been to science.

Doubtless the phenomena in question are simple enough, and in no way transcend our powers of comprehension if only we could find the clue; but for my part I prefer not to find it, for I am of a singularly romantic disposition, deriving more gratification from mystery than from knowledge. It was commonly remarked of me when I was a child that my big blue eyes appeared to have been made rather to look into than look out of—such was their dreamful beauty, and in my frequent periods of abstraction, their indifference to what was going on. In those peculiarities they resembled, I venture to think, the soul which lies behind them, always more intent upon some lovely conception which it has created in its own image than concerned about the laws of nature and the material frame of things. All this, irrelevant and egotistic as it may seem, is related by way of accounting for the meagerness of the light that I am able to throw upon a subject that has engaged so much of my attention, and concerning which there is so keen and general a curiosity. With my powers and opportunities, another person might doubtless have an explanation for much of what I present simply as narrative.

The Hypnotist

My first knowledge that I possessed unusual powers came to me in my fourteenth year, when at school. Happening one day to have forgotten to bring my noonday luncheon, I gazed longingly at that of a small girl who was preparing to eat hers. Looking up, her eyes met mine and she seemed unable to withdraw them. After a moment of hesitancy she came forward in an absent kind of way and without a word surrendered her little basket with its tempting contents and walked away. Inexpressibly pleased, I relieved my hunger and destroyed the basket. After that I had not the trouble to bring a luncheon for myself: that little girl was my daily purveyor; and not infrequently in satisfying my simple need from her frugal store I combined pleasure and profit by constraining her attendance at the feast and making misleading proffer of the viands, which eventually I consumed to the last fragment. The girl was always persuaded that she had eaten all herself; and later in the day her tearful complaints of hunger surprised the teacher, entertained the pupils, earned for her the sobriquet of Greedy-Gut, and filled me with a peace past understanding.

A disagreeable feature of this otherwise satisfactory condition of things was the necessary secrecy: the transfer of the luncheon, for example, had to be made at some distance from the madding crowd, in a wood; and I blush to think of the many other unworthy subterfuges entailed by the situation. As I was (and am) naturally of a frank and open disposi-

tion, these became more and more irksome, and but for the reluctance of my parents to renounce the obvious advantages of the new regime I would gladly have reverted to the old. The plan that I finally adopted to free myself from the consequences of my own powers excited a wide and keen interest at the time, and that part of it which consisted in the death of the girl was severely condemned, but it is hardly pertinent to the scope of this narrative.

For some years afterward I had little opportunity to practice hypnotism; such small essays as I made at it were commonly barren of other recognition than solitary confinement on a bread-and-water diet; sometimes, indeed, they elicited nothing better than the cat-o'-nine-tails. It was when I was about to leave the scene of these small disappointments that my one really important feat was performed.

I had been called into the warden's office and given a suit of civilian's clothing, a trifling sum of money, and a great deal of advice, which I am bound to confess was of a much better quality than the clothing. As I was passing out of the gate into the light of freedom I suddenly turned and looking the warden gravely in the eye, soon had him in control.

"You are an ostrich," I said.

At the postmortem examination the stomach was found to contain a great quantity of indigestible articles mostly of wood or metal. Stuck fast in the esophagus and constituting, according to the coro-

ner's jury, the immediate cause of death, one door-knob.

I was by nature a good and affectionate son, but as I took my way into the great world from which I had been so long secluded I could not help remembering that all my misfortunes had flowed like a stream from the niggard economy of my parents in the matter of school luncheons; and I knew of no reason to think they had reformed.

On the road between Succotash Hill and South Asphyxia* is a little open field which once contained a shanty known as Pete Gilstrap's Place, where that gentleman used to murder travelers for a living. The death of Mr. Gilstrap and the diversion of nearly all the travel to another road occurred so nearly at the same time that no one has ever been able to say which was cause and which effect. Anyhow, the field was now a desolation and the Place had long been burned. It was while going afoot to South Asphyxia, the home of my childhood, that I found both my parents on their way to the Hill. They had hitched their team and were eating luncheon under an oak tree in the center of the field. The sight of the luncheon called up painful memories of my school-days and roused the sleeping lion in my breast. Approaching the guilty couple, who at once recognized me, I ventured to suggest that I share their hospitality.

"Of this cheer, my son," said the author of my being, with characteristic pomposity, which age had

not withered, "there is sufficient for but two. I am not, I hope, insensible to the hunger-light in your eyes, but—"

My father has never completed that sentence; what he mistook for hunger-light was simply the earnest gaze of the hypnotist. In a few seconds he was at my service. A few more sufficed for the lady, and the dictates of a just resentment could be carried into effect. "My former father," I said, "I presume that it is known to you that you and this lady are no longer what you were?"

"I have observed a certain subtle change," was the rather dubious reply of the old gentleman. "It is perhaps attributable to age."

"It is more than that," I explained. "It goes to character—to species. You and the lady here are, in truth, two broncos—wild stallions both, and unfriendly."

"Why, John," exclaimed my dear mother, "you don't mean to say that I am—"

"Madam," I replied, solemnly, fixing my eyes again upon hers, "you are."

Scarcely had the words fallen from my lips when she dropped upon her hands and knees, and backing up to the old man squealed like a demon and delivered a vicious kick upon his shin! An instant later he was himself down on all fours, headed away from her and flinging his feet at her simultaneously and successively. With equal earnestness but inferior agility, because of her hampering body gear, she plied her

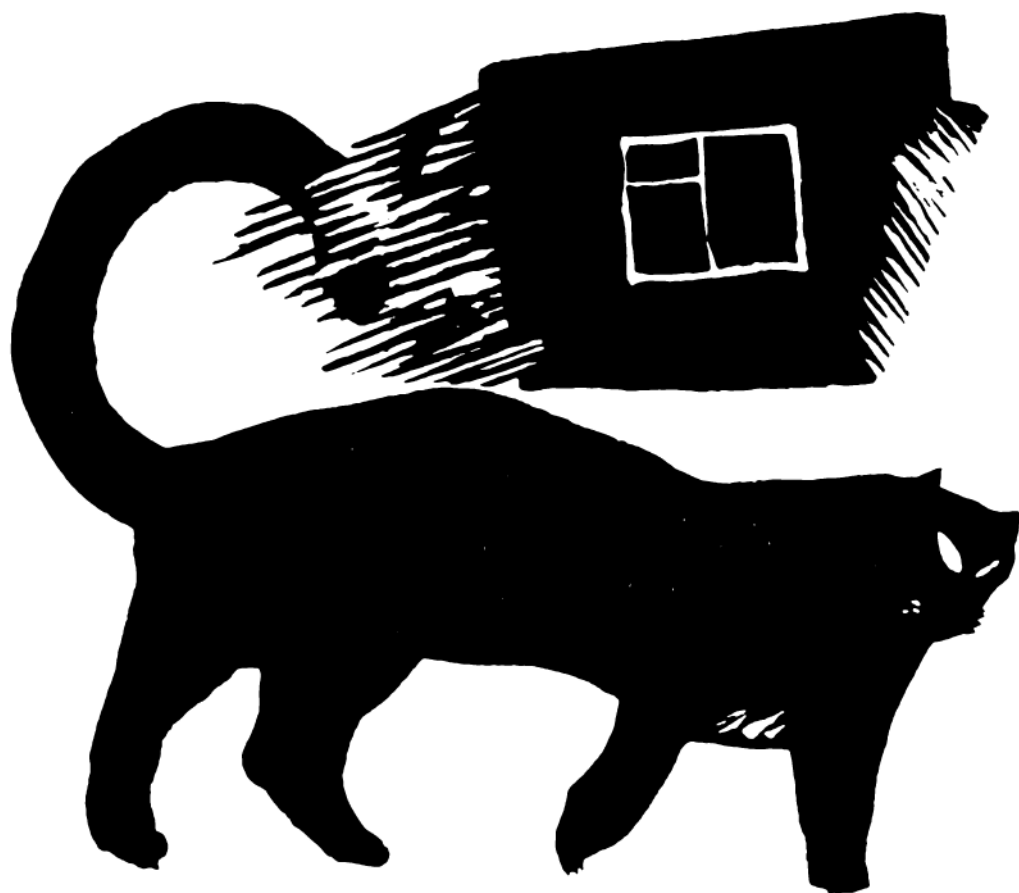
own. Their flying legs crossed and mingled in the most bewildering way; their feet sometimes meeting squarely in midair, their bodies thrust forward, falling flat upon the ground and for a moment helpless. On recovering themselves they would resume the combat, uttering their frenzy in the nameless sounds of the furious brutes which they believed themselves to be—the whole region rang with their clamor! Round and round they wheeled, the blows of their feet falling “like lightnings from the mountain cloud.” They plunged and reared backward upon their knees, struck savagely at each other with awkward descending blows of both fists at once, and dropped again upon their hands as if unable to maintain the upright position of the body. Grass and pebbles were torn from the soil by hands and feet; clothing, hair, faces inexpressibly defiled with dust and blood. Wild, inarticulate screams of rage attested the delivery of the blows; groans, grunts and gasps their receipt. Nothing more truly military was ever seen at Gettysburg* or Waterloo*: the valor of my dear parents in the hour of danger can never cease to be to me a source of pride and gratification. At the end of it all two battered, tattered, bloody and fragmentary vestiges of mortality attested the solemn fact that the author of the strife was an orphan.

Arrested for provoking a breach of the peace, I was, and have ever since been, tried in the Court of Technicalities and Continuances whence, after fifteen years of proceedings, my attorney is moving heaven

and earth to get the case taken to the Court of Remandment for New Trials.

Such are a few of my principal experiments in the mysterious force or agency known as hypnotic suggestion. Whether or not it could be employed by a bad man for an unworthy purpose I am unable to say.





THE BOARDED WINDOW

In 1830, only a few miles back from what is now the great city of Cincinnati, lay an immense and almost unbroken forest.* The whole region was sparsely settled by people of the frontier—restless souls who no sooner had hewn

fairly comfortable homes out of the wilderness and attained to that degree of prosperity which to-day we should call indigence than, impelled by some mysterious impulse of their nature, they abandoned all and pushed further westward, to encounter new perils and privations in the effort to regain comforts which they had voluntarily renounced. Many of them had already forsaken that region for the remoter settlements, but among those remaining was one who had been of those first arriving. He lived alone in a house of logs, surrounded on all sides by the great forest, of whose gloom and silence he seemed a part, for no one had ever known him to smile or speak a needless word. His simple wants were supplied by the sale or barter of skins of wild animals in the river town, for not a thing did he grow upon the land which he might, if needful, have claimed by right of undisturbed possession.* There were evidences of "improvement"—a few acres of ground immediately about the house had once been cleared of its trees, the decayed stumps of which were half concealed by the new growth that had been suffered to repair the ravage wrought by the axe at some distant day. Apparently the man's zeal for agriculture had burned with a failing flame, expiring in penitential ashes.*

The little log house, with its chimney of sticks, its roof of warping clapboards, weighted with traversing poles and its "chinking" of clay,* had a single door and, directly opposite, a window. The latter, however, was boarded up—nobody could remember a

The Boarded Window

time when it was not. And none knew why it was so closed; certainly not because of the occupant's dislike of light and air, for on those rare occasions when a hunter had passed that lonely spot, the recluse had commonly been seen sunning himself on his doorstep if heaven had provided sunshine for his need. I fancy there are few persons living to-day who ever knew the secret of that window, but I am one, as in due time you shall see.

The man's name was said to be Murlock. He was apparently seventy years old, actually about fifty. Something besides years had had a hand in his aging. His hair and long, full beard were white, his grey, lustreless eyes sunken, his face singularly seamed with wrinkles, which appeared to belong to two intersecting systems. In figure he was tall and spare, with a stoop of the shoulders—a burden bearer. I never saw him; these particulars I learned from my grandfather, from whom also I got the story when I was a lad. He had known him when living near by in that early day.

One day Mr. Murlock was found in his cabin, dead. It was not a time and place for coroners and newspapers, and I suppose it was agreed that he had died from natural causes or I should have been told, and should remember. I only know that, with what was probably a sense of the fitness of things, the body was buried near the cabin, alongside the grave of his wife, who had preceded him by so many years that local tradition had retained hardly a hint of her existence. That closes the final chapter of this true

story—excepting, indeed, the circumstances that many years afterward, in company with an equally intrepid spirit, I penetrated to the place and ventured near enough to the ruined cabin to throw a stone against it, and ran away to avoid the ghost which every well-informed boy thereabout knew haunted the spot. As this record grows naturally out of my personal relation to what it records, that circumstance, as a part of the relation, has a certain relevancy. But there is an earlier chapter—that supplied by my grandfather.

When Mr. Murlock built his cabin and began laying sturdily about with his axe to hew out a farm—the rifle, meanwhile his means of support—he was young, strong, and full of hope. In that Eastern country whence he came he had married as was the fashion, a young woman in all ways worthy of his honest devotion, who share the dangers and privations of his lot with a willing spirit and light heart. There is no known record of her name; of her charms of mind and person tradition is silent and the doubter is at liberty to entertain his doubt; but God forbid that I should share it! Of their affection and happiness there is abundant assurance in every added day of the man's widowed life; for what but the magnetism of a blessed memory could have chained that venturesome spirit to a lot like that?

One day Murlock returned from gunning in a distant part of the forest to find his wife prostrate with fever and delirious. There was no physician within

miles, no neighbor, nor was she in a condition to be left, to summon help. So he set about the task of nursing her back to health, but at the end of the third day she passed into a comatose state, and so passed away, with never a gleam of returning reason.

From what we know of a nature like his we may venture to sketch in some of the details of the outline picture drawn by my grandfather. When convinced that she was dead, Murlock had sense enough to remember that the dead must be prepared for burial. In performance of this sacred duty he blundered now and again, did certain things incorrectly, and others which he did correctly were done over and over. His occasional failures to accomplish some simple and ordinary act filled him with astonishment, like that of a drunken man who wonders at the suspension of familiar natural laws. He was surprised, too, that he did not weep—surprised and a little ashamed; surely it is unkind not to weep for the dead. “To-morrow,” he said aloud, “I shall have to make the coffin and dig the grave; and then I shall miss her, when she is no longer in sight, but now—she is dead, of course, but it is all right—it *must* be all right, somehow. Things cannot be as bad as they seem.”

He stood over the body in the fading light, adjusting the hair and putting the finishing touches on a simple toilet, doing all mechanically, with soulless care. And still through his consciousness ran an undersense of conviction that all was right—that he should have her again as before, and everything ex-

plained. He had had no experience in grief; his capacity had not been enlarged by use. His heart could not contain it all, nor his imagination rightly conceive it. He did not know he was so hard hit; that knowledge would come later, and never go. Grief is an artist of powers as various as the characters of the instruments upon which he plays his dirges for the dead, evoking from some the sharpest shrillest notes, from others the low, grave chords that throb recurrent like the slow beating of a distant drum. Some natures it startles; some it stupefies. To one it comes like the stroke of an arrow, stinging all the sensibilities to a keener life; to another as the blow of a bludgeon, which in crushing benumbs. We may conceive Murlock to have been that way affected, for (and here we are upon surer ground than that of conjecture) no sooner had he finished his pious work than, sinking into a chair by the side of the table upon which the body lay, and noting how white the profile showed in the deepening gloom, then laying his arms upon the table's edge, he dropped his face into them, tearless yet and unutterably weary. At that moment came in through the open window a long, wailing sound like the cry of a lost child in the far deeps of the darkening wood! But the man did not move. Again and nearer than before sounded that unearthly cry upon his failing sense. Perhaps it was a wild beast; perhaps it was a dream; for Murlock was asleep.

Some hours later as it afterwards appeared, this unfaithful watcher awoke, and, lifting his head from

his arms, intently listened—he knew not why. There in the black darkness by the side of his dead, recalling all without a shock, he strained his eyes to see—he knew not what. His senses all were alert, his breath was suspended, his blood had stilled its tides as if to assist the silence. Who—what had waked him, and where was it?

Suddenly, the table shook beneath his arms, and at the same moment he heard, or fancied that he heard, a light, soft step—another—sounds as of bare feet upon the floor!

He was terrified beyond the power to cry out or move. Perforce he waited—waited there in the darkness through centuries of such dread as one may know yet live to tell. He tried vainly to speak the dead woman's name, vainly to stretch forth his hand across the table to learn if she were there. His throat was powerless, his arms and hands were like lead. Then occurred something most frightful. Some heavy body seemed hurled against the table with an impetus that pushed it against his breast so sharply as nearly to overthrow him, and at the same instant, he heard and felt the fall of something upon the floor with so violent a thump that the whole house was shaken by the impact. Then ensued a scuffling and a confusion of sounds impossible to describe. Murlock had risen to his feet, and terror had by excess forfeited control of his faculties. He flung his hands upon the table. Nothing was there!

There is a point at which terror may turn to

madness; and madness incites to action. With no definite intent, from no motive but the wayward impulse of a madman, Murlock sprang to the wall, and with a little groping seized his loaded rifle, and without aim discharged it. By the flash which lit up the room with a vivid illumination, he saw an enormous panther dragging the dead woman toward the window, its teeth fixed in her throat. Then there was darkness blacker than before, and silence; and when he returned to consciousness the sun was high and the woods vocal with songs of birds.

The body lay near the window, where the beast had left it when frightened away by the flash and report of the rifle. The clothing was deranged, the long hair in disorder, the limbs lay anyhow. From the throat, dreadfully lacerated, had issued a pool of blood not yet entirely coagulated. The ribbon with which he had bound the wrists was broken; the hands were tightly clenched. Between the teeth was a fragment of the animal's ear.





A JUG OF SYRUP

his narrative begins with the death of its hero. Silas Deemer died on the 16th day of July, 1863, and two days later his remains were buried. As he had been personally known to every man, woman and well-grown child in

the village, the funeral, as the local newspaper phrased it, "was largely attended." In accordance with a custom of the time and place, the coffin was opened at the graveside and the entire assembly of friends and neighbors filed past, taking a last look at the face of the dead. And then, before the eyes of all, Silas Deemer was put into the ground. Some of the eyes were a trifle dim, but in a general way it may be said that at that interment there was lack of neither observance nor observation; Silas was indubitably dead, and none could have pointed out any ritual delinquency that would have justified him in coming back from the grave. Yet if human testimony is good for anything (and certainly it once put an end to witchcraft in and about Salem*) he came back.

I forgot to state that the death and burial of Silas Deemer occurred in the little village of Hillbrook, where he had lived for thirty-one years. He had been what is known in some parts of the Union (which is admittedly a free country) as a "merchant"; that is to say, he kept a retail shop for the sale of such things as are commonly sold in shops of that character. His honesty had never been questioned, so far as is known, and he was held in high esteem by all. The only thing that could be urged against him by the most censorious was a too close attention to business. It was not urged against him, though many another, who manifested it in no greater degree, was less leniently judged. The business to which Silas was

A Jug of Syrup

devoted was mostly his own—that, possibly, may have made a difference.

At the time of Deemer's death nobody could recollect a single day, Sundays excepted, that he had not passed in his "store," since he had opened it more than a quarter-century before. His health having been perfect during all that time, he had been unable to discern any validity in whatever may or might have been urged to lure him astray from his counter; and it is related that once when he was summoned to the county seat as a witness in an important law case and did not attend, the lawyer who had the hardihood to move that he be "admonished" was solemnly informed that the Court regarded the proposal with "surprise." Judicial surprise being an emotion that attorneys are not commonly ambitious to arouse, the motion was hastily withdrawn and an agreement with the other side effected as to what Mr. Deemer would have said if he had been there—the other side pushing its advantage to the extreme and making the suppositious testimony distinctly damaging to the interests of its proponents. In brief, it was the general feeling in all that region that Silas Deemer was the one immobile verity of Hillbrook, and that his translation in space would precipitate some dismal public ill or strenuous calamity.

Mrs. Deemer and two grown daughters occupied the upper rooms of the building, but Silas had never been known to sleep elsewhere than on a cot behind the counter of the store. And there, quite by accident,

he was found one night, dying, and passed away just before the time for taking down the shutters. Though speechless, he appeared conscious, and it was thought by those who knew him best that if the end had unfortunately been delayed beyond the usual hour for opening the store the effect upon him would have been deplorable.

Such had been Silas Deemer—such the fixity and invariety of his life and habit, that the village humorist (who had once attended college) was moved to bestow upon him the sobriquet of “Old Ibidem,” and, in the first issue of the local newspaper after the death, to explain without offence that Silas had taken “a day off.” It was more than a day, but from the record it appears that well within a month Mr. Deemer made it plain that he had not the leisure to be dead.

One of Hillbrook’s most respected citizens was Alvan Creede, a banker. He lived in the finest house in town, kept a carriage and was a most estimable man variously. He knew something of the advantages of travel, too, having been frequently in Boston, and once, it was thought, in New York, though he modestly disclaimed that glittering distinction. The matter is mentioned here merely as a contribution to an understanding of Mr. Creede’s worth, for either way it is creditable to him—to his intelligence if he had put himself, even temporarily, into contact with metropolitan culture; to his candor if he had not.

One pleasant summer evening at about the hour of

A Jug of Syrup

ten Mr. Creede, entering at his garden gate, passed up the gravel walk, which looked very white in the moonlight, mounted the stone steps of his fine house and pausing a moment inserted his latchkey in the door. As he pushed this open he met his wife, who was crossing the passage from the parlor to the library. She greeted him pleasantly and pulling the door farther back held it for him to enter. Instead he turned and, looking about his feet in front of the threshold, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Why!—what the devil," he said, "has become of that jug?"

"What jug, Alvan?" his wife inquired, not very sympathetically.

"A jug of maple syrup—I brought it along from the store and set it down here to open the door. What the—"

"There, there, Alvan, please don't swear again," said the lady, interrupting. Hillbrook, by the way, is not the only place in Christendom where a vestigial polytheism forbids the taking in vain of the Evil One's name.*

The jug of maple syrup which the easy ways of village life had permitted Hillbrook's foremost citizen to carry home from the store was not there.

"Are you quite sure, Alvan?"

"My dear, do you suppose a man does not know when he is carrying a jug? I bought that syrup at Deemer's as I was passing. Deemer himself drew it and lent me the jug, and I—"

The sentence remains to this day unfinished. Mr. Creede staggered into the house, entered the parlor and dropped into an arm-chair, trembling in every limb. He had suddenly remembered that Silas Deemer was three weeks dead.

Mrs. Creede stood by her husband, regarding him with surprise and anxiety.

“For Heaven’s sake,” she said, “what ails you?”

Mr. Creede’s ailment having no obvious relation to the interests of the better land he did not apparently deem it necessary to expound it on that demand; he said nothing—merely stared. There were long moments of silence broken by nothing but the measured ticking of the clock, which seemed somewhat slower than usual, as if it were civilly granting them an extension of time in which to recover their wits.

“Jane, I have gone mad—that is it.” He spoke thickly and hurriedly. “You should have told me; you must have observed my symptoms before they became so pronounced that I have observed them myself. I thought I was passing Deemer’s store; it was open and lit up—that is what I thought; of course it is never open now. Silas Deemer stood at his desk behind the counter. My God, Jane, I saw him as distinctly as I see you. Remembering that you had said you wanted some maple syrup, I went in and bought some—that is all—I bought two quarts of maple syrup from Silas Deemer, who is dead and underground, but nevertheless drew that syrup from a cask and handed it to me in a jug. He talked with

A Jug of Syrup

me, too, rather gravely, I remember, even more so than was his way, but not a word of what he said can I now recall. But I saw him—good Lord, I saw and talked with him—and he is dead! So I thought, but I'm mad, Jane, I'm as crazy as a beetle; and you have kept it from me."

This monologue gave the woman time to collect what faculties she had.

"Alvan," she said, "you have given no evidence of insanity, believe me. This was undoubtedly an illusion—how should it be anything else? That would be too terrible! But there is no insanity; you are working too hard at the bank. You should not have attended the meeting of directors this evening; anyone could see that you were ill; I knew something would occur."

It may have seemed to him that the prophecy had lagged a bit, awaiting the event, but he said nothing of that, being concerned with his own condition. He was calm now, and could think coherently.

"Doubtless the phenomenon was subjective," he said, with a somewhat ludicrous transition to the slang of science. "Granting the possibility of spiritual apparition and even materialization, yet the apparition and materialization of a half-gallon brown clay jug—a piece of coarse, heavy pottery evolved from nothing—that is hardly thinkable."

As he finished speaking, a child ran into the room—his little daughter. She was clad in a bedgown. Hastening to her father she threw her arms

about his neck, saying: "You naughty papa, you forgot to come in and kiss me. We heard you open the gate and got up and looked out. And, papa dear, Eddy says mayn't he have the little jug when it is empty?"

As the full import of that revelation imparted itself to Alvan Creede's understanding he visibly shuddered. For the child could not have heard a word of the conversation.

The estate of Silas Deemer being in the hands of an administrator who had thought it best to dispose of the "business," the store had been closed ever since the owner's death, the goods having been removed by another "merchant" who had purchased them *en bloc*.^{*} The rooms above were vacant as well, for the widow and daughters had gone to another town.

On the evening immediately after Alvan Creede's adventure (which had somehow "got out") a crowd of men, women and children thronged the sidewalk opposite the store. That the place was haunted by the spirit of the late Silas Deemer was now well known to every resident of Hillbrook, though many affected disbelief. Of these the hardiest, and in a general way the youngest, threw stones against the front of the building, the only part accessible, but carefully missed the unshuttered windows. Incredulity had not grown to malice. A few venturesome souls crossed the street and rattled the door in its frame; struck matches and held them near the window; attempted to view the black interior. Some of the spectators

invited attention to their wit by shouting and groaning and challenging the ghost to a foot-race.

After a considerable time had elapsed without any manifestation, and many of the crowd had gone away, all those remaining began to observe that the interior of the store was suffused with a dim, yellow light. At this all demonstrations ceased; the intrepid souls about the door and windows fell back to the opposite side of the street and were merged in the crowd; the small boys ceased throwing stones. Nobody spoke above his breath; all whispered excitedly and pointed to the now steadily growing light. How long a time had passed since the first faint glow had been observed none could have guessed, but eventually the illumination was bright enough to reveal the whole interior of the store; and there, standing at his desk behind the counter Silas Deemer was distinctly visible!

The effect upon the crowd was marvelous. It began rapidly to melt away at both flanks, as the timid left the place. Many ran as fast as their legs would let them; others moved off with greater dignity, turning occasionally to look backward over the shoulder. At last a score or more, mostly men, remained where they were, speechless, staring, excited. The apparition inside gave them no attention; it was apparently occupied with a book of accounts.

Presently three men left the crowd on the sidewalk as if by a common impulse and crossed the street. One of them, a heavy man, was about to set his

shoulder against the door when it opened, apparently without human agency, and the courageous investigators passed in. No sooner had they crossed the threshold than they were seen by the awed observers outside to be acting in the most unaccountable way. They thrust out their hands before them, pursued devious courses, came into violent collision with the counter, with boxes and barrels on the floor, and with one another. They turned awkwardly hither and thither and seemed trying to escape, but unable to retrace their steps. Their voices were heard in exclamations and curses. But in no way did the apparition of Silas Deemer manifest an interest in what was going on.

By what impulse the crowd was moved none ever recollected, but the entire mass—men, women, children, dogs—made a simultaneous and tumultuous rush for the entrance. They congested the doorway, pushing for precedence—resolving themselves at length into a line and moving up step by step. By some subtle spiritual or physical alchemy observation had been transmuted into action—the sightseers had become participants in the spectacle—the audience had usurped the stage.

To the only spectator remaining on the other side of the street—Alvan Creede, the banker—the interior of the store with its inpouring crowd continued in full illumination; all the strange things going on there were clearly visible. To those inside all was black darkness. It was as if each person as he was thrust in

A Jug of Syrup

at the door had been stricken blind, and was maddened by the mischance. They groped with aimless imprecision, tried to force their way out against the current, pushed and elbowed, struck at random, fell and were trampled, rose and trampled in their turn. They seized one another by the garments, the hair, the beard—fought like animals, cursed, shouted, called one another opprobrious and obscene names. When, finally, Alvan Creede had seen the last person of the line pass into that awful tumult the light that had illuminated it was suddenly quenched and all was as black to him as to those within. He turned away and left the place.

In the early morning a curious crowd had gathered about "Deemer's." It was composed partly of those who had run away the night before, but now had the courage of sunshine, partly of honest folk going to their daily toil. The door of the store stood open; the place was vacant, but on the walls, the floor, the furniture, were shreds of clothing and tangles of hair. Hillbrook militant had managed somehow to pull itself out and had gone home to medicine its hurts and swear that it had been all night in bed. On the dusty desk, behind the counter, was the sales book. The entries in it, in Deemer's handwriting, had ceased on the 16th day of July, the last of his life. There was no record of a later sale to Alvan Creede.

That is the entire story—except that men's passions having subsided and reason having resumed its immemorial sway, it was confessed in Hillbrook that,

considering the harmless and honorable character of his first commercial transaction under the new conditions, Silas Deemer, deceased, might properly have been suffered to resume business at the old stand without mobbing. In that judgment the local historian from whose unpublished work these facts are compiled had the thoughtfulness to signify his concurrence.





THE DIFFICULTY OF CROSSING A FIELD

One morning in July 1854, a planter named Williamson, living six miles from Selma, Alabama, was sitting with his wife and a child on the veranda of his dwelling. Immediately in front of the house was a lawn, perhaps fifty

yards in extent between the house and public road, or, as it was called, the "pike."* Beyond this road lay a close-cropped pasture of some ten acres, level and without a tree, rock, or any natural or artificial object on its surface. At the time there was not even a domestic animal in the field. In another field, beyond the pasture, a dozen slaves were at work under an overseer.

Throwing away the stump of a cigar, the planter rose, saying, "I forgot to tell Andrew about those horses." Andrew was the overseer.

Williamson strolled leisurely down the gravel walk, plucking a flower as he went, passed across the road and into the pasture, pausing a moment as he closed the gate leading into it, to greet a passing neighbor, Armour Wren, who lived on an adjoining plantation. Mr. Wren was in an open carriage with his son James, a lad of thirteen. When he had driven some two hundred yards from the point of meeting, Mr. Wren said to his son, "I forgot to tell Mr. Williamson about those horses."

Mr. Wren had sold to Mr. Williamson some horses, which were to have been sent for that day, but for some reason not now remembered it would be inconvenient to deliver them until the morrow. The coachman was directed to drive back, and as the vehicle turned Williamson was seen by all three, walking leisurely across the pasture. At that moment one of the coach horses stumbled and came near falling. It had no more than fairly recovered itself when

The Difficulty of Crossing a Field

James Wren cried, "Why, father, what has become of Mr. Williamson?"

It is not the purpose of this narrative to answer that question.

Mr. Wren's strange account of the matter, given under oath in the course of legal proceedings relating to the Williamson estate, here follows:

"My son's exclamation caused me to look toward the spot where I had seen the deceased [*sic*]* an instant before, but he was not there, nor was he anywhere visible. I cannot say that at the moment I was greatly startled, or realized the gravity of the occurrence, though I thought it singular. My son, however, was greatly astonished and kept repeating his question in different forms until we arrived at the gate. My black boy Sam was similarly affected, even in a greater degree, but I reckon more by my son's manner than by anything he had himself observed. [*This sentence in the testimony was stricken out.*] As we got out of the carriage at the gate of the field, and while Sam was hanging [*sic*] the team to the fence. Mrs. Williamson, with her child in her arms and followed by several servants, came running down the walk in great excitement, crying, 'He is gone, he is gone! O God! what an awful thing!' and many other such exclamations, which I do not distinctly recollect. I got from them the impression that they related to something more than the mere disappearance of her husband, even if that had occurred before her eyes. Her manner was wild, but not more so, I think, than

was natural under the circumstances. I have no reason to think she had at that time lost her mind. I have never since seen nor heard of Mr. Williamson."

This testimony, as might have been expected, was corroborated in almost every particular by the only other eyewitness (if that is a proper term)—the lad James. Mrs. Williamson had lost her reason and the servants were, of course, not competent to testify. The boy James Wren had declared at first that he *saw* the disappearance, but there is nothing of this in his testimony given in court. None of the field hands working in the field to which Williamson was going had seen him at all, and the most rigorous search of the entire plantation and adjoining country failed to supply a clue. The most monstrous and grotesque fictions, originating with the blacks, were current in that part of the state for many years, and probably are to this day; but what has been here related is all that is certainly known of the matter. The courts decided that Williamson was dead, and his estate was distributed according to law.



Fables





THE MAN WITH NO ENEMIES

An Inoffensive Person walking in a public place was assaulted by a Stranger with a Club, and severely beaten.

When the Stranger with a Club was brought to trial, the complainant said to the Judge:

"I do not know why I was assaulted. I have not an enemy in the world."

"That," said the defendant, "is why I struck him."

"Let the prisoner be discharged," said the Judge. "A man who has no enemies has no friends. The courts are not for such."



THE LIFESAVER

Seventy-five Men presented themselves before the President of the Humane Society and demanded the great gold medal for lifesaving.

"Why, yes," said the President. "By diligent effort so many men must have saved a considerable number of lives. How many did you save?"

"Seventy-five, sir," replied their Spokesman.

"Ah, yes, that is one each—very good work—very good work, indeed," the President said. "You shall

not only have the Society's great gold medal, but its recommendation for employment at the several life-boat stations along the coast. But how did you save so many lives?"

The Spokesman of the Men replied:

"We are officers of the law, and have just abandoned the pursuit of two murderous outlaws."

SAINT AND SINNER

"My friend," said a distinguished officer of the Salvation Army* to a Most Wicked Sinner, "I was once a drunkard, a thief, an assassin. The Divine Grace has made me what I am."

The Most Wicked Sinner looked at him from head to foot. "Henceforth," he said, "the Divine Grace, I fancy, will let well enough alone."

THE AUSTRALIAN GRASSHOPPER

A Distinguished Naturalist was traveling in Australia, when he saw a Kangaroo in session and flung a stone at it. The Kangaroo immediately adjourned, tracing against the sunset sky a parabolic curve spanning seven provinces, and vanished below the horizon. The Distinguished Naturalist looked interested, but said nothing for an hour; then he said to his native Guide:

"You have pretty wide meadows here, I suppose?"

"No, not very wide," the Guide answered. "About the same as in England and America."

After another long silence the Distinguished Naturalist said:

"The hay which we shall purchase for our horses this evening—I shall expect to find the stalks about fifty feet long. Am I right?"

"Why, no," said the Guide, "a foot or two is about the usual length of our hay. What can you be thinking of?"

The Distinguished Naturalist made no immediate reply, but later, as in the shades of night they journeyed through the desolate vastness of the Great Lone Land, he broke the silence:

"I was thinking," he said, "of the uncommon magnitude of that grasshopper."

THE DISCONTENTED MALEFACTOR

A Judge having sentenced a Malefactor to the penitentiary was proceeding to point out to him the disadvantages of crime and the profit of reformation.

"Young Honor," said the Malefactor, interrupting, "would you be kind enough to alter my punishment to ten years in the penitentiary and nothing else?"

"Why," said the Judge surprised, "I have given you only three years!"

"Yes, I know," assented the Malefactor—"three years' imprisonment and the preaching. If you please, I should like to commute the preaching."

TWO POETS

Two Poets were quarreling for the Apple of Discord and the Bone of Contention,* for they were very hungry.

“My sons,” said Apollo, “I will part the prizes between you. You,” he said to the First Poet, “excel in Art—take the Apple. And you,” he said to the Second Poet, “in Imagination—take the Bone.”

“To Art the best prize!” said the First Poet, triumphantly, and endeavoring to devour his award broke all his teeth. The Apple was a work of Art.

“That shows our master’s contempt for mere Art,” said the Second Poet, grinning.

Thereupon he attempted to gnaw his Bone, but his teeth passed through it without encountering resistance. It was an imaginary Bone.

THE AUSTERE GOVERNOR

A Governor visiting a state prison was implored by a Convict to pardon him.

“What are you in for?” asked the Governor.

“I held a high office,” the Convict humbly replied, “and sold subordinate appointments.”

“Then I decline to interfere,” said the Governor, with asperity. “A man who abuses his office by making it serve a private end and purvey a personal advantage is unfit to be free. By the way, Mr. Warden,” he added to that official, as the Convict slunk away, “in appointing you to this position, I was

given to understand that your friends could make the Shikane County* delegation to the next state convention* solid for—for the present administration.* Was I rightly informed?”

“You were, sir.”

“Very well, then, I will bid you good day. Please be so good as to appoint my nephew Night Chaplain and Reminder of Mothers and Sisters.”*

THE REFORM SCHOOL BOARD

The members of the School Board in Doosnoswair being suspected of appointing female teachers for an improper consideration, the people elected a Board composed wholly of women. In a few years the scandal was at an end; there were no female teachers in the Department.



THE WITCH'S STEED

A Broomstick that had long served a witch as a steed complained of the nature of its employment, which it thought degrading.

“Very well,” said the Witch, “I will give you work in which you will be associated with intellect—you will come in contact with brains. I shall present you to a housewife.”

“What!” said the Broomstick, “do you consider the hands of a housewife intellectual?”

“I referred,” said the Witch, “to the head of her good man.”*

THE BUMBO OF JIAM*

The Pahdour of Patagascar and the Gookul of Madagonia* were disputing about an island that both claimed. Finally, at the suggestion of the International League of Cannon Founders, which had important branches in both countries, they decided to refer their claims to the Bumbo of Jiam, and abide by his judgment. In setting the preliminaries of the arbitration they had, however, the misfortune to disagree, and appealed to arms. At the end of a long and disastrous war, when both sides were exhausted and bankrupt, the Bumbo of Jiam intervened in the interest of peace.

“My great and good friends,” he said to his brother sovereigns, “it will be advantageous to you to learn that some questions are more complex and perilous than others, presenting a greater number of points upon which it is possible to differ. For four generations your royal predecessors disputed about possession of that island without falling out. Beware, oh,

beware the perils of international arbitration!—against which I feel it my duty to protect you henceforth.”

So saying, he annexed both countries, and after a long, peaceful and happy reign was poisoned by his Prime Minister.

THE TOLERANT SOVEREIGN

The Gamdoodle of Moop summoned his Secretary of War to an audience and said:

“Sir, you cannot be unaware of the great outcry that my loyal subjects are making against you. They say that you are a rascal.”

“Your Majesty,” replied the Secretary of War, “it is untrue.”

“I’m right glad to hear it,” the Gamdoodle replied, rising to intimate that the interview was at an end. But observing that the official did not depart, he added, “Is there anything to say?”

“Yes, your Majesty,” the Secretary of War answered. “I wish to surrender my portfolio, for while the public outcry is untrue it is not unjust. I am a fool.”

At this the Gamdoodle was graciously pleased to smile. “My good ma,” he said, “return to your duties. I am that way myself.”

A LITTLE LEARNING*

Having been taught Greek, a Parrot was puffed up with conceit.

“Observe,” said he, “the advantages of a classical education! I can chatter nonsense in the tongue of Plato.”

“I should advice you,” said his Master, quietly, “to let it be nonsense of a character somewhat different from that of some of Plato’s most admired compatriots if you value the privilege of hanging at that open window. Commit no mythology,* please.”



THE FLYING MACHINE

An Ingenious Man who had built a flying machine invited a great concourse of people to see it go up. At the appointed moment, everything being ready, he boarded the car and turned on the power. The machine immediately broke through the massive substructure upon which it was builded,* and sank out of sight into the earth, the aeronaut springing out barely in time to save himself.

“Well,” said he, “I have done enough to demonstrate the correctness of my details. The defects,” he added, with a look at the ruined brickwork, “are merely basic and fundamental.”

On this assurance the people came forward with subscriptions to build a second machine.

THE INCREDULOUS SUBORDINATE

A Commanding General retreating after defeat came upon the camp of a Subordinate, who was playing cards with his men.

“Why did you not march to my assistance, sir?” thundered the Commanding General. “Did you not hear the reports of my guns?”

“Reports? Oh, yes,” the Subordinate replied. “I heard them all right, but I did not believe them. I used to be a reporter.”

THE STATUE AT BUMBOOGLE

On a high hill overlooking the ancient city of Bumboogle is a colossal statue, erected by the nation, to the memory of the illustrious Gaaka-Wolwol, “the best and wisest of mankind.” A Traveler from a distant country said to the Custodian of the Statue, who is the highest officer of the realm, “The winds of the sea, O Most Exalted, have not blown the fame of your great countryman to my native shores. What did he do?”

“Nothing. That is how we know him to have been good.”

“But his wisdom—what did he say?”

“Nothing. That is how we know him to have been wise.”

TWO POLITICIANS

Two Politicians were exchanging ideas regarding the rewards for public service.

“The reward that I most desire,” said the First Politician, “is the gratitude of my fellow citizens.”

“That would be very gratifying, no doubt,” said the Second Politician. “But, alas! in order to obtain it one has to retire from politics.”

For an instant they gazed upon each other with inexpressible tenderness; then the First Politician murmured, “God’s will be done! Since we cannot hope for reward, let us be content with what we have.”

And lifting their right hands for a moment from the public treasury they swore to be content.



A FAULTY PERFORMANCE

A pet Opossum belonging to a Great Critic stole his favorite kitten and was about to kill and eat it

when she saw him approaching, and fearing detection she concealed it in her pouch.

“Well, my pretty one,” said the Great Critic, with condescension, “what new charms and graces have you today?”

Before she could reply the kitten set up a diligent and persistent mewling. When at last the music had ceased the Opossum said:

“I’ve been dabbling a little in mimicry and ventriloquism. I thought it would please you, sir.”

“The desire to please is ever pleasing,” the Great Critic answered, not without a touch of professional dignity, “but you have much to learn about the mewling of kittens.”

A DEFECTIVE PETITION

An Associate Justice of the Supreme Court was sitting by a river when a Traveler approached and said:

“I wish to cross. Will it be lawful to use this boat?”

“It will” was the reply. “It is my boat.”

The Traveler thanked him, and pushing the boat into the water embarked and rowed away. But the boat sank and he was drowned.

“Heartless man!” said an Indignant Spectator. “Why did you not tell him that your boat had a hole in it?”

“The matter of the boat’s condition,” said the great jurist, “was not brought before me.”

PATRIOT AND BANKER

A Patriot who had taken office poor and retired rich was introduced at a bank where he desired to open an account.

"With pleasure," said the Honest Banker. "We shall be glad to do business with you, but first you must make yourself an honest man by restoring what you stole from the Government."

"Good heavens!" cried the Patriot. "If I do that, I shall have nothing to deposit with you."

"I don't see that," the Honest Banker replied. "We are not the whole American people."

"Ah, I understand," said the Patriot, musing. "At what sum do you estimate this bank's proportion of the country's loss by me?"

"About a dollar," answered the Honest Banker.

And with a proud consciousness of serving his country wisely and well he charged that sum to the account.

THE CRIMSON CANDLE

A Man lying at the point of death called his wife to his bedside and said:

"I am about to leave you forever; give me, therefore, one last proof of your affection and fidelity. In my desk you will find a crimson candle, which has been blessed by the High Priest and has a peculiar mystical significance. Swear to me that while it is in

existence you will not remarry.”

The Woman swore and the Man died. At the funeral the Woman stood at the head of the bier, holding a lighted crimson candle till it was wasted entirely away.

THE FOOLISH WOMAN

A Married Woman, whose lover was about to reform by running away, procured a pistol and shot him dead.

“Why did you do that, madam?” inquired a Policeman, sauntering by.

“Because,” replied the Married Woman, “he was a wicked man, and had purchased a ticket to Chicago.”

“My sister,” said an adjacent Man of God, solemnly, “you cannot stop the wicked from going to Chicago by killing them.”

THE FUGITIVE OFFICE

A Traveler arriving at the capital of a nation saw a vast plain outside the wall, filled with struggling and shouting men. While he looked upon the alarming spectacle an Office broke away from the throng and took shelter in a tomb near to where he stood, the crowd being too intent upon hammering one another to observe that the cause of their contention had departed.

“Poor bruised and bleeding creature,” said the compassionate Traveler, “what was your offense?”

“I sought the man,” said the Office.

POLICEMAN AND CITIZEN

A Policeman, finding a man who had fallen in a fit, said, “This man is drunk,” and began beating him on the head with his club. A passing Citizen said:

“Why do you murder a man that is already harmless?”

Thereupon the Policeman left the man in a fit and attacked the Citizen, who after receiving several severe contusions ran away.

“Alas,” said the Policeman, “why did I not attack the sober one before exhausting myself upon the other?”

Thenceforward he pursued that plan, and by zeal and diligence rose to be Chief, and sobriety is unknown in the region subject to his sway.

MORAL PRINCIPLE AND MATERIAL INTEREST

A Moral Principle met a Material Interest on a bridge wide enough for but one.

“Down, you base thing!” thundered the Moral Principle, “and let me pass over you!”

The Material Interest merely looked in the other's eyes without saying anything.

"Ah," said the Moral Principle, hesitatingly, "let us draw lots to see which one of us shall retire till the other has crossed."

The Material Interest maintained an unbroken silence and an unwavering stare.

"In order to avoid a conflict," the Moral Principle resumed, somewhat uneasily, "I shall myself lie down and let you walk over me."

Then the Material Interest found his tongue. "I don't think you are very good walking," he said. "I am a little particular about what I have underfoot. Suppose you get off into the water."

It occurred that way.

THE DUTIFUL SON

A Millionaire who had gone to an almshouse to visit his father met a Neighbor there, who was greatly surprised.

"What!" said the Neighbor, "you do sometimes visit your father?"

"If our situations were reversed," said the Millionaire, "I am sure he would visit me. The old man has always been rather proud of me. Besides," he added softly, "I had to have his signature. I am insuring his life."



A MATTER OF TASTE

"I say, you," bawled a fat Ox in a stall to lusty young Ass who was braying outside, "the like of that is not in good taste."

"In whose good taste, my adipose censor?" inquired the Ass, not too respectfully.

"Why—ah—h'm. I mean that it does not suit me. You should bellow."

"May I ask how it concerns you whether I bellow or bray, or do both, or neither?"

"I cannot tell you," said the Ox, shaking his head despondingly. "I do not at all understand the matter. I can only say that I have been used to censure all discourse that differs from my own."

"Exactly," said the Ass. "You have tried to make an art of impudence by calling preferences principles. In 'taste' you have invented a word incapable of definition to denote an idea impossible of expression, and by employing the word 'good' or 'bad' in connection with it you indicate a merely subjective process, in terms of an objective quality. Such presumption transcends the limits of mere effrontery and passes into the boundless empyrean of pure gall!"

The bovine critic, having no words to express his disapproval of this remarkable harangue, said it was in bad taste.

THE FABULIST

An Illustrious Satirist was visiting a traveling menagerie with a view to collecting literary materials. As he was passing near the Elephant that animal said:

“How sad that so justly famous a censor should mar his work by ridicule of persons with pendulous noses—who are the salt of the earth!”

The Kangaroo said:

“I do so enjoy that great man’s censure of the ridiculous—particularly his attacks on the proboscidae,* but, alas! he has no reverence for the marsupials, and laughs at our way of carrying our young in a pouch.”

The Camel said:

“If he would only respect the Sacred Hump, he would be faultless. As it is, I cannot permit his work to be read in the presence of my family.”

The Ostrich, seeing his approach, thrust her head into the straw, saying:

“If I do not conceal myself, he may be reminded to write something disagreeable about my lack of a crest, or my appetite for scrap iron; and although he is inexpressibly brilliant when he devoted himself to ridicule of folly and greed, his dulness is matchless when he transcends the limits of legitimate comment.”

“That,” said the Buzzard to his mate, “is the distinguished author of that glorious fable, ‘The Ostrich and the Keg of Raw Nails.’ I regret to add, that he wrote also, ‘The Buzzard’s Feast,’ in which a carrion diet is contumeliously disparaged. A carrion diet is the foundation of sound health. If nothing but corpses were eaten, death would be unknown.”

Seeing an attendant approaching, the illustrious Satirist passed out of the tent and mingled with the crowd. It was afterward discovered that he had crept in under the canvas without paying.

TWO OF THE PIOUS

A Christian and Heathen in His Blindness were disputing, when the Christian, with that charming consideration which serves to distinguish the truly pious from wolves that perish, exclaimed:

“If I could have my way, I’d blow up all your gods with dynamite.”

“And if I could have mine,” retorted the Heathen in His Blindness, bitterly malevolent but oleagiously suave, “I’d fan all yours out of the universe.”

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

Having been told by an angel that Nouredin Becar was the happiest man in the world, the Sultan caused him to be brought to the palace and said:

“Impart to me, I command thee, the secret of thy happiness.”

Fables

“O father of the sun and the moon,” answered Noureddin Becar, “I did not know that I was happy.”

“That,” said the Sultan, “is the secret that I sought.”

Noureddin Becar retired in deep dejection, fearing that his new-found happiness might forsake him.

ATONEMENT

Two Women in heaven claimed one Man newly arrived.

“I was his wife,” said one.

“I his sweetheart,” said the other.

St. Peter said to the Man, “Go down to the Other Place—you have suffered enough.”

A PART OF THE WAGES

“Ours is a life of self-sacrifice,” said a Clergyman. “While others pursue gain or pleasure, we burn the midnight oil in studying how to crack the hardest theological nuts. And all for what earthly reward?”

“Well,” said his Parishioner, thoughtfully, “there are, for example, the kernels.”

SHEEP AND LION

“You are a beast of war,” said the Sheep to the Lion, “yet men go gunning for you. Me, a believer in nonresistance, they do not hunt.”

"They do not need to," replied the son of the desert. "They can breed you."

OFFICER AND THUG

A Chief of Police who had seen an Officer beating a Thug was very indignant, and said he must not do so any more on pain of dismissal.

"Don't be too hard on me," said the Officer, smiling. "I was beating him with a stuffed club."

"Nevertheless," persisted the Chief of Police, "it was a liberty that must have been very disagreeable, though it may not have hurt. Please do not repeat it."

"But," said the Officer, still smiling, "it was a stuffed Thug."

In attempting to express his gratification the Chief of Police thrust out his right hand with such violence that his skin was ruptured at the armpit and a stream of sawdust poured from the wound. He was a stuffed Chief of Police.

FAMINE VERSUS PESTILENCE

"It is hard on you, my gallant friend," said the Victorious Besieger, "but I must say it. Pestilence was among my troops, and if you had not surrendered to me I should have surrendered to you."

"That is what I feared you would do," replied the Vanquished Commander. "My men were eating their belts and cartridge boxes. We could not properly provide for you."

THE INCONSOLABLE WIDOW

A Woman in widow's weeds was weeping upon a grave.

"Console yourself, madam," said a Sympathetic Stranger. "Heaven's mercies are infinite. There is another man somewhere, besides your husband, with whom you can still be happy."

"There was"—she sobbed—"there was, but this is his grave."

THE MYSTERIOUS WORD

The Chief of a battalion of war correspondents read a manuscript account of a battle.

"My son," he said to its Author, "your story is distinctly unavailable. You say we lost only two men instead of a hundred, that the enemy's loss is unknown, instead of ten thousand, and that we were defeated and ran away. That is no way to write."

"But consider," expostulated the conscientious scribe, "my story may be tame with regard to the number of our casualties, disappointing as to the damage done to the enemy, and shocking in its denouement, but it has the advantage of being the truth."

"I don't quite understand," said the Chief, scratching his head.

"Why, the advantage," the other exclaimed, "the merit—the distinction—the profitable excel-

lence—the—”

“Oh,” said the Chief, “I know very well the signification of ‘advantage,’ but what the devil do you mean by ‘truth’?”

A PLUCKED GOOSE

A Man was plucking a live Goose, when the bird addressed him thus:

“Suppose that you were a goose. Do you think that you would relish this sort of thing?”

“Suppose that I were,” said the Man. “Do you think that you would like to pluck me?”

“Indeed I should!” was the natural, emphatic, but injudicious reply.

“Just so,” concluded her tormentor, pulling out another handful of feathers, “that is the way that *I* feel about it.”

THE TYRANT FROG

A Snake swallowing a frog headfirst was approached by a Naturalist with a stick.

“Ah, my deliverer,” said the Snake as well as he could, “you have arrived just in time. This reptile, you see, is pitching into me without provocation.”

“Sir,” replied the Naturalist, “I need a snakeskin for my collection, but if you had not explained I should not have molested you, for I thought you were at dinner.”



WIDOW AND SOLDIER

A Widow whose husband had been hanged in chains was keeping vigil by the corpse the first night and tearfully beseeching the Sentinel who guarded it to let her steal it.

"Madam," he said, "I can no longer resist your entreaties. Your beauty overcomes my sense of duty. I will deliver the body to you and take its place in the cage, where a stroke of my dagger will baffle justice and give me the happiness of dying for so lovely a lady."

"No," said the lady, "I cannot consent to the sacrifice of so noble a life. If indeed you look upon me with favor, assist me and my servants to remove the sacred object to my chateau, where you shall remain in concealment until we can escape from the country."

"Nay," said the Sentinel, "I should surely be discovered and torn from your arms. In three days you can claim the body of your beloved husband; then

you can confer upon an honorable soldier such happiness and distinction as you may think his devotion merits.”

“Three days!” the lady exclaimed. “That is long for waiting and short for flight. If unencumbered we may reach the frontier. Already the day begins to break—let us leave the body and set out.”

TWO SONS

A Man had Two Sons. The elder was virtuous and dutiful, the younger wicked and crafty. When the father was about to die, he called them before him and said, “I have only two things of value—my herd of camels and my blessing. How shall I allot them?”

“Give to me,” said the Younger Son, “thy blessing, for it may reform me. The camels I should be sure to sell and squander the money.”

The Elder Son, disguising his joy, said that he would try to be content with the camels and a pious mind.

It was so arranged, and the Man died. Then the wicked Younger Son went before the Cadi and said, “Behold, my brother has defrauded me of my lawful heritage. He is so bad that our father, as is well known, denied him his blessing. Is it likely that he gave him the camels?”

So the Elder Son was compelled to give up the herd and was soundly bastinadoed for his rapacity.

CONSOLATION

A great country having vindicated its courage and prowess by fifteen defeats in which none of its enemy's troops suffered any damage, its Prime Minister sued for peace.

"I'll not be hard on you," said the Victor. "You shall keep everything except your colonies, your liberty, your credit and your self-respect."

"Ah," said the Prime Minister, "you are indeed magnanimous. You leave us our honor."

THE SEEKER FOR SIMPLICITY

Laden with a grain of wheat which he had acquired with infinite toil, an Ant was breasting a current of his fellows, each of whom, as is their etiquette, insisted on stopping him, feeling him all over and shaking hands. It occurred to him that excess of ceremony is abuse of courtesy; so he laid down his burden, sat upon it, folded all his legs and smiled a smile of great grimness.

"Hello!" said his Fellow Ants, "what is the matter with you?"

"Sick of the hollow conventionalities of an effete civilization," was the rasping reply—"returned to the simplicity of primitive life."

"Ah! then we must trouble you for that grain. In the primitive life there are no rights of property."

A great white light fell upon the understanding of that rebellious insect. He rose and, grappling the grain of wheat, trotted away with alacrity. It was observed that he submitted with a wealth of patience to manipulation of his friends and neighbors and went long distances out of his way to shake hands with strangers on competing lines of traffic.

REVELATION

A Lion was attacked by a pack of famishing Wolves, who circled about him, howling as loud as they could, though none dared approach him.

"These are very useful creatures," said the Lion, as he lay down for his afternoon nap. "They apprise me of my virtues. I never before knew that I was good to eat."

DISAPPOINTMENT

A Dog that had been engaged in pursuit of his own tail abandoned the chase and, lying down, curled up for repose. In his new posture he found his tail within easy reach of his teeth and seized it with avidity, but immediately released it, wincing with pain.

"After all," he said, "there is more joy in pursuit than in possession."

THE JUSTICE AND HIS ACCUSER

An eminent Justice of the Supreme Court of Gowk was accused of having obtained his appointment by fraud.

“You wander,” he said to the Accuser. “It is of little importance how I obtained my power. It is only important how I have used it.”

“I confess,” said the Accuser, “that in comparison with the rascally way in which you have conducted yourself on the Bench the rascally way in which you got there does seem rather a trifle.”

WOLF AND TORTOISE

A Wolf, meeting a Tortoise, said, “My friend, you are the slowest thing out of doors. I do not see how you manage to escape from your enemies.”

“As I lack the power to run away,” replied the Tortoise, “Providence has thoughtfully supplied me with an impenetrable shell.”

The Wolf reflected a long time; then he said:

“It seems to me that it would have been just as easy to give you long legs.”

ALARM AND PRIDE

“Good morning, my friend,” said Alarm to Pride. “How are you this morning?”

“Very tired,” answered Pride, seating himself on a

stone by the wayside and mopping his steaming brow. "The politicians are wearing me out by pointing to their dirty records with *me*, when they could as well use a stick."

Alarm sighed sympathetically and said:

"It is pretty much the same way here. Instead of using an opera glass they view the acts of their opponents with *me*!

As these patient drudges were mingling their tears, they were notified that they must go on duty again, for one of the political parties had nominated a thief and was about to hold a gratification meeting.

ENVIRONMENT

"Prisoner," said the Judge, austerely, "you are justly convicted of murder. Are you guilty, or were you brought up in Kentucky?"

A TALISMAN

Having been summoned to serve as a juror, a Prominent Citizen sent a physican's certificate stating that he was afflicted with softening of the brain.

"The gentleman is excused," said the Judge, handing back the certificate to the person who had brought it. "He has a brain."

THE SHADOW OF THE LEADER

A Political Leader was walking out one sunny day, when he observed his Shadow leaving him and walking rapidly away.

"Come back here, you scoundrel," he cried.

"If I had been a scoundrel," answered the Shadow, increasing its speed, "I should not have left you."

A RADICAL PARALLEL

Some White Christians engaged in driving Chinese Heathens out of an American town found a newspaper published in Peking in the Chinese tongue and compelled one of their victims to translate an editorial. It turned out to be an appeal to the people of the province of Pang Ki to drive the foreign devils out of the country and burn their dwellings and churches. At this evidence of Mongolian barbarity the White Christians were so greatly incensed that they carried out their original design.

PHYSICIANS TWO

A Wicked Old Man finding himself ill sent for a Physician, who prescribed for him and went away. Then the Wicked Old Man sent for Another Physician, saying nothing of the first, and an entirely different treatment was ordered. This continued for some weeks, the physicians visiting him on alternate days

and treating him for two different disorders, with constantly enlarging doses of medicine and more and more rigorous nursing. But one day they accidentally met at his bedside while he slept and, the truth coming out, a violent quarrel ensued.

“My good friends,” said the patient, awakened by the noise of the dispute, and apprehending the cause of it, “pray be more reasonable. If I could for weeks endure you both, can you not for a little while endure each other? I have been well for ten days, but have remained in bed in the hope of gaining by repose the strength that would justify me in taking your medicines. So far I have touched none of them.”

THE THISTLES UPON THE GRAVE

A Mind Reader made a wager that he would be buried alive and remain so for six months, then be dug up alive. In order to secure the grave against secret disturbance, it was sown with thistles. At the end of three months the Mind Reader lost his bet. He had come up to eat the thistles.

KANGAROO AND ZEBRA

A Kangaroo, hopping awkwardly along with some bulky object concealed in her pouch, met a Zebra, and desirous of keeping his attention upon himself, said:

"Your costume looks as if you might have come out of the penitentiary."

"Appearances are deceitful," replied the Zebra, smiling in the consciousness of a more insupportable wit, "or I should have to think that you had come out of the Legislature."



THE HONEST CADI

A Robber who had plundered a merchant of one thousand pieces of gold was taken before the Cadi, who asked him if he had anything to say why he should not be decapitated.

"Your Honor," said the Robber, "I could do no otherwise than take the money, for Allah made me that way."

"Your defense is ingenious and sound," said the Cadi, "and I must acquit you of criminality. Unfortunately, Allah has also made me so that I must take off your head—unless," he added, thoughtfully, "you offer me a half of the gold; for He made me weak under temptation."

Thereupon the Robber put five hundred pieces of gold into the Cadi's hand.

“Good,” said the Cadi. “I shall now remove only one-half your head. To show my trust in your discretion I shall leave intact the half that you talk with.”

THE OVERLOOKED FACTOR

A Man that owned a fine Dog, and by a careful selection of its mate had bred a number of animals but a little lower than the angels, fell in love with his washerwoman, married her, and reared a family of dolts.

“Alas!” he exclaimed, contemplating the melancholy result, “had I but chosen a mate for myself with half the care that I did for my Dog I should now be a proud and happy father.”

“I’m not so sure of that,” said the Dog, overhearing the lament. “There’s a difference, certainly, between your whelps and mine, but I flatter myself that it is not due altogether to the mothers. You and I are not entirely alike ourselves.”

THE RETURNED CALIFORNIAN

A Man was hanged by the neck until he was dead. This was in 1893.

“Whence do you come?” Saint Peter asked when the Man presented himself at the gate of Heaven.

“From California,” replied the applicant.

“Enter, my son, enter. You bring joyous tidings.”

When the Man had vanished inside, Saint Peter

took his memorandum tablet and made the following entry:

“February 16, 1893. California settled by the Christians.”*

THE NO CASE

A Statesman who had been indicted by an unfeeling Grand Jury was arrested by a Sheriff and thrown into jail. As this was abhorrent to his fine spiritual nature, he sent for the District Attorney and asked that the case against him be dismissed.

“Upon what grounds?” asked the District Attorney.

“Lack of evidence to convict,” replied the accused.

“Do you happen to have the lack with you?” the official asked. “I should like to see it.”

“With pleasure,” said the other. “Here it is.”

So saying he handed the other a check, which the District Attorney carefully examined, and then pronounced it the most complete absence of both proof and presumption that he had ever seen. He said it would acquit the poorest man in the world.

TWO OF THE DAMNED .

Two Blighted Beings, haggard, lacrymose and detested, met on a blasted heath in the light of a struggling moon.

"I wish you a merry Christmas," said the First Blighted Being, in a voice like that of a singing tomb.

"And I you a happy New Year," responded the Second Blighted Being, with the accent of a penitent accordion.

They then fell upon each other's neck and wept scalding rills down each other's spine in token of their banishment to the Realm of Ineffable Bosh. For one of these accursed creatures was the First of January, and the other the twenty-fifth of December.

RELIGIONS OF ERROR

Hearing a sound of strife, a Christian in the Orient asked his Dragoman the cause of it.

"The Buddhists are cutting Mohammedan throats," the Dragoman replied, with Oriental composure.

"I did not know," remarked the Christian, with scientific interest, "that that would make so much noise."

"The Mohammedans are cutting Buddhist throats," added the Dragoman.

"It is astonishing," mused the Christian, "how violent and how general are religious animosities."

So saying he visibly smuggled* and went off to telegraph for a brigade of cutthroats to protect Christian interests.

THE HUMBLE PEASANT

An Office Seeker whom the President had ordered out of Washington was watering the homeward highway with his tears.

“Ah,” he said, “how disastrous is ambition! How unsatisfying its rewards! How terrible its disappointments! Behold younder peasant tilling his field in peace and contentment! He rises with the lark, passes the day in wholesome toil, and lies down at night to pleasant dreams. In the mad struggle for place and power he has no part; the roar of the strife reaches his ear like the distant murmur of the ocean. Happy, thrice happy man! I will approach him and bask in the sunshine of his humble felicity. Peasant, hail!”

Leaning upon his rake, the Peasant returned the salutation with a nod, but said nothing.

“My friend,” said the Office Seeker, “you see before you the wreck of an ambitious man—ruined by the pursuit of place and power. This morning when I set out from the national capital—”

“Stranger,” the Peasant interrupted, “if you’re going back there soon maybe you wouldn’t mind using your influence to make me Postmaster at Smith’s Corners.”

The traveler passed on.

JUDGE AND RASH ACT

A Judge who had for years looked in vain for an opportunity for infamous distinction, but whom no

litigant thought worth bribing, sat one day upon the Bench, lamenting his hard lot and threatening to put an end to his life if business did not improve. Suddenly he found himself confronted by a dreadful figure clad in a shroud, whose pallor and stony eyes smote him with a horrible apprehension.

“Who are you,” he faltered, “and why do you come here?”

“I am the Rash Act,” was the sepulchral reply. “You may commit me.”

“No,” the Judge said thoughtfully, “no, that would be quite irregular. I do not sit today as a committing magistrate.”*

DECEASED AND HEIRS

A Man died leaving a large estate and many sorrowful relations who claimed it. After some years, when all but one had had judgement given against them, that one was awarded the estate, which he asked his Attorney to have appraised.

“There is nothing to appraise,” said the Attorney, pocketing his last fee.

“Then,” said the Successful Claimant, “what good has all this litigation done me?”

“You have been a good client to me,” the Attorney replied, gathering up his books and papers, “but I must say you betray a surprising ignorance of the purpose of litigation.”



AN OPTIMIST

Two Frogs in the belly of a snake were considering their altered circumstances.

“This is pretty hard luck,” said one.

“Don’t jump to conclusions,” the other said. “We are out of the wet and provided with board and lodging.”

“With lodging, certainly,” said the First Frog, “but I don’t see the board.”

“You are a croaker,” the other explained. “We are the board.”

THE COMPASSIONATE PHYSICIAN

A Kindhearted Physician sitting at the bedside of a patient afflicted with an incurable and painful disease heard a noise behind him and turning saw a Cat laughing at the feeble efforts of a wounded Mouse to drag itself out of the room.

“You cruel beast!” he cried. “Why don’t you kill it at once, like a lady?”

Rising, he kicked the Cat out of the door and picking up the Mouse compassionately put it out of

its misery by pulling off its head. Recalled to the bedside by the moans of his patient, the Kindhearted Physician administered a stimulant, a tonic and a nutrient, and went away.

A FORFEITED RIGHT

The Chief of the Weather Bureau having predicted a fair day, a Thrifty Person hastened to lay in a large stock of umbrellas, which he exposed for sale on the sidewalk; but the weather remained clear and nobody would buy. Thereupon the Thrifty Person brought an action against the Chief of the Weather Bureau for the cost of the umbrellas.

“Your Honor,” said the Defendant’s Attorney, when the case was called, “I move that this astonishing action be dismissed. Not only is my client in no way responsible for the loss, but he distinctly forecast the fair weather that caused it.”

“That is just it, your Honor,” replied the Counsel for the Plaintiff. “By making a correct forecast the defendant fooled my client in the only way that he could do so. He has lied so much and so notoriously that he has no right to tell the truth.”

Judgment for the plaintiff.

REVENGE

An Insurance Agent was trying to induce a Hard Man to Deal With to take out a policy on his house.

After listening to him for an hour, while he painted in vivid colors the extreme danger of fire consuming the house, the Hard Man to Deal With said:

“Do you really think it likely that my house will burn down inside the time that my policy will run?”

“Certainly,” replied the Insurance Agent. “Have I not been trying all this time to convince you that I do?”

“Then,” said the Hard Man to Deal With, “why are you so eager to have your Company bet me money that it will not?”

The Agent was silent and thoughtful for a moment; then he drew the other apart into an unfrequented place and whispered in his ear:

“My friend, I will impart to you a dark secret. Years ago the Company betrayed my sweetheart by promise of marriage. Under an assumed name I have wormed myself into its service for revenge; and as there is a heaven above us, I will have its heart’s blood!”

MAN AND WART

A Person with a Wart on His Nose met a Person Similarly Afflicted, and said:

“Let me propose your name for membership in the Imperial order of Abnormal Proboscidiens,* of which I am the High Noble Toby and Surreptitious Treasurer. Two months ago I was the only member. One month ago there were two. Today we number four

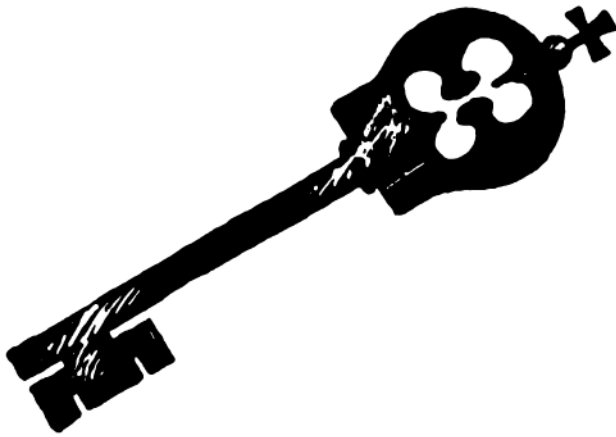
Emperors of the Abnormal Proboscis in good standing—doubles every four weeks, see? That's geometrical progression—you know how that piles up. In a year and a half every man in the country will have a wart on his nose. Powerful Order! Initiation, five dollars."

"My friend," said the Person Similarly Afflicted, "here are five dollars. Keep my name off your books."

"Thank you kindly," the Man with a Wart on His Nose replied, pocketing the money. "It is just the same to us as if you joined. Good-by."

He went away, but in a little while he was back.

"I quite forgot to mention the monthly dues," he said.



AT HEAVEN'S GATE

Having risen from the tomb, a Woman presented herself at the gate of Heaven, and knocked with a trembling hand.

"Madam," said Saint Peter, rising and approaching the wicket, "whence do you come?"

"From San Francisco," replied the Woman, with embarrassment, as great beads of perspiration spangled her spiritual brow.

"Never mind, my good girl," the Saint said, compassionately. "Eternity is a long time. You can live that down."

"But that, if you please, is not all." The Woman was growing more and more confused. "I poisoned my husband. I chopped up my babies. I—"

"Ah," said the Saint, with sudden austerity, "your confession suggests a grave possibility. Were you a member of the Women's Press Association?"

The lady drew herself up and replied with warmth:

"I was not."

The gates of pearl and jasper swung back upon their golden hinges, making the most ravishing music, and the Saint, stepping aside, bowed low, saying:

"Enter, then, into thine eternal rest."

But the Woman hesitated.

"The poisoning—the chopping—the—the—" she stammered.

"Of no consequence, I assure you. We are not going to be hard on a lady who did not belong to the Women's Press Association. Take a harp."

"But I applied for membership—I was black-balled."

"Take two harps."

FOGY AND SHEIK

A Fogy who lived in a cave near a great caravan route returned to his home one day and saw, nearby, a great concourse of men and animals, and in their midst a tower, at the foot of which something with wheels smoked and panted like an exhausted horse. He sought the Sheik of the Outfit.

“What sin art thou committing now, O son of a Christian dog?” said the Fogy, with a truly Oriental politeness.

“Boring for water, you black-and-tan galoot!” replied the Sheik of the Outfit, with that ready repartee which distinguishes the Unbeliever.

“Knowest thou not, thou whelp of darkness and father of disordered livers,” cried the Fogy, “that water will cause grass to spring up here, and trees and possibly even flowers? Knowest thou not that thou art, in truth, producing an oasis?”

“And don’t you know,” said the Sheik of the Outfit, “that caravans will then stop here for rest and refreshment, giving you a chance to steal the camels, the horses and the goods?”

“May the wild hog defile my grave, but thou speakest wisdom!” the Fogy replied, with the dignity of his race, extending his hand. “Sheik.”*

They shook.

SPORTSMAN AND SQUIRREL

A Sportsman who had wounded a Squirrel, which was making desperate efforts to drag itself away, ran after it with a stick, exclaiming:

“Poor thing! I will put it out of its misery.”

At that moment the Squirrel stopped from exhaustion, and looking up at its enemy, said:

“I don’t venture to doubt the sincerity of your compassion, though it comes rather late, but you seem to lack the faculty of observation. Do you not perceive by my actions that the dearest wish of my heart is to continue in my misery?”

At this exposure of his hypocrisy the Sportsman was so overcome with shame and remorse that he would not strike the Squirrel, but pointing it out to his dog, walked thoughtfully away.

NO IRREGULARITY

A Jackal in pursuit of a Deer was about to seize it, when an earthquake opened a broad and deep chasm between him and his prey.

“This,” he said, “is a pernicious interference with the laws of Nature. I refuse to recognize any such irregularity.”

So he resumed the chase, endeavoring to cross the abyss by two leaps.

A TRANSPOSITION

Traveling through the sagebrush country a Jackass met a Rabbit, who exclaimed in great astonishment:

“Good heavens! How did you grow so big? You are doubtless the largest rabbit living.”

“No,” said the Jackass, “you are the smallest donkey.”

After a good deal of fruitless argument the question was referred for decision to a passing Coyote, who was a bit of a demagogue and desirous to stand well with both.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “you are both right, as was to have been expected of persons so gifted with appliances for receiving instruction from the wise. You, sir”—turning to the superior animal—“are, as he has accurately observed, a rabbit. And you”—to the other—“are correctly described as a jackass. In transposing your names man has acted with incredible folly.”

They were so pleased with the decision that they declared the Coyote their candidate for the Grizzly Bearship*; but whether he ever obtained the office history does not relate.

OLD MAN AND PUPIL

A Beautiful Old Man, meeting a Sunday school Pupil, laid his hand tenderly upon the lad's head,

Fables

saying, "Listen, my son, to the words of the wise and heed the advice of the righteous."

"All right," said the Sunday school Pupil, "go ahead."

"Oh, I haven't anything to tell you, really," said the Beautiful Old Man. "I am only observing one of the customs of age. I am a pirate."

And when he had taken his hand from the lad's head the latter observed that his hair was full of clotted blood. Then the Beautiful Old Man went his way, instructing other youth.

TWO FOOTPADS

Two Footpads sat at their grog in a roadside resort, comparing the evening's adventures.

"I held up the Chief of Police," said the First Footpad, "and got away with what he had."

"And I," said the Second Footpad, "held up the United States District Attorney, and got a way with—"

"Good Lord!" interrupted the other in astonishment and admiration, "you got away with what that fellow had?"

"No," the unfortunate narrator explained, "with a small part of what I had."



DOG AND DOCTOR

A Dog that had seen a Doctor attending the burial of a wealthy patient, said. "When do you expect to dig it up?"

"Why should I dig it up?" the Doctor asked.

"When I bury a bone," said the Dog, "it is with an intention to uncover it later and pick it."

"The bones that I bury," said the Doctor, "are those that I can no longer pick."



from
the Devil's
Dictionary





ABASEMENT, *n.* A decent and customary mental attitude in the presence of wealth or power. Peculiarly appropriate in an employee when addressing an employer.

ABILITY, *n.* The natural equipment to accomplish some small part of the meaner ambitions distinguishing able men from dead ones. In the last analysis ability is commonly found to consist mainly in a high degree of solemnity. Perhaps, however, this impressive quality is rightly appraised; it is no easy task to be solemn.

ABNORMAL, *adj.* Not conforming to standard. In matters of thought and conduct, to be independent is to be abnormal, to be abnormal is to be detested. Wherefore the loxicographer adviseth* a striving toward a straiter resemblance to the Average Man than he hath to himself. Whoso attaineth thereto shall have peace, the prospect of death and the hope of Hell.

ABORIGINES, *n.* Persons of little worth found cumbering the soil of a newly discovered country. They soon cease to cumber; they fertilize.

ABRACADABRA.

By *Abracadabra* we signify
 An infinite number of things.
'Tis the answer to What? And How? and Why?
And Whence? and Whither?—a word whereby
 The Truth (with the comfort it brings)
Is open to all who grope in night,*
Crying for Wisdom's holy light.

Whether the word is a verb or a noun
 Is knowledge beyond my reach.
I only know that 'tis handed down
 From sage to sage,
 From age to age—
 An immortal part of speech!

Of an ancient man the tale is told
That he lived to be ten centuries old,
 In a cave on a mountain side.
 (True, he finally died.)
The fame of his wisdom filled the land,
For his head was bald, and you'll understand
 His beard was long and white
 And his eyes uncommonly bright.

Philosophers gathered from far and near
To sit at his feet and hear and hear,
 Though he never was heard
 To utter a word
But "*Abracadabra, abracadab,*
 Abracada, abracad,
 Abraca, abrac, abra, ab!"
 'Twas all he had,

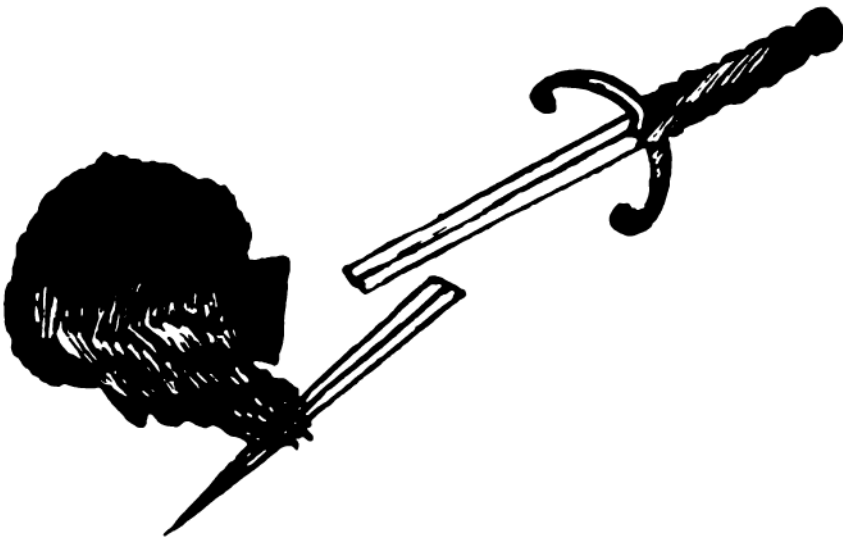
'Twas all they wanted to hear, and each
Made copious notes of the mystical speech.

The Devil's Dictionary

Which they published next—
A trickle of text
In a meadow of commentary.
Mighty big books were these,
In number, as leaves of trees;
In learning, remarkable—very!

He's dead,
As I said,
And the books of the sages have perished,
But his wisdom is sacredly cherished.
In *Abracadabra* it solemnly rings,
Like an ancient bell that forever swings.
O, I love to hear
That word make clear
Humanity's General Sense of Things.

*Jamrach Holobom.**



ABRIDGE, *v. t.* To shorten.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for a people to abridge* their king, a decent

respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*—*Oliver Cromwell*.*

ABRUPT, *adj.* Sudden, without ceremony, like the arrival of a cannon-shot and the departure of the soldier whose interests are most affected by it. Dr. Samuel Johnson* beautifully said of another author's ideas that they were "concatenated without abruption."

ABSCOND, *v. i.* To "move in a mysterious way," commonly* with the property belonging to another.

Spring beckons! All things to the call respond;
The trees are leaving and cashiers abscond.

Phela Orm.

ABSENT, *adj.* Peculiarly exposed to the tooth of detraction; vilified; hopelessly in the wrong; superseded in the consideration and affection of another.

To men a man is but a mind. Who cares
What face he carries or what form he wears?
But woman's body is the woman. O,
Stay thou, my sweetheart, and do never go,
But heed the warning words the sage hath said:
A woman absent is a woman dead.

Jogo Tyree.

The Devil's Dictionary

ABSENTEE, *n.* A person with an income who has had the forethought to remove himself from the sphere of exaction.

ABSOLUTE, *adj.* Independent, irresponsible. An absolute monarchy is one in which the sovereign does as he pleases so long as he pleases the assassins. Not many absolute monarchies are left, most of them having been replaced by limited monarchies, where the sovereign's power for evil (and for good) is greatly curtailed, and by republics, which are governed by chance.

ABSTAINER, *n.* A weak person who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure. A total abstainer is one who abstains from everything but abstention, and especially from inactivity in the affairs of others.

Said a man to a crapulent youth: "I thought
You a total abstainer, my son."
"So I am, so I am," said the scapegrace caught—
"But not, sir, a bigoted one."

G. J.

ABSURDITY, *n.* A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion.

ACADEME,* *n.* An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught.

ACADEMY, *n.* (from academe). A modern school where football is taught.

ACCIDENT, *n.* An inevitable occurrence due to the action of immutable natural laws.

ACCOMPLICE, *n.* One associated with another in a crime, having guilty knowledge and complicity, as an attorney who defends a criminal, knowing him guilty. This view of the attorney's position in the matter has not hitherto commanded the assent of attorneys, no one having offered them a fee for assenting.

ACCORD, *n.* Harmony.

ACCORDION, *n.* An instrument in harmony with the sentiments of an assassin.

ACCUSE, *v. t.* To affirm another's guilt or unworth; most commonly as a justification of ourselves for having wronged him.

ACHIEVEMENT, *n.* The death of endeavor and the birth of disgust.

ACKNOWLEDGE, *v. t.* To confess. Acknowledgment of one another's faults is the highest duty imposed by our love of truth.

ACQUAINTANCE, *n.* A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to. A degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous.

ACTUALLY, *adv.* Perhaps; possibly.

ADAGE, *n.* Boned wisdom for weak teeth.

ADAMANT, *n.* A mineral frequently found beneath a corset. Soluble in sollicitate of gold.

ADHERENT, *n.* A follower who has not yet obtained all that he expects to get.

ADMINISTRATION, *n.* An ingenious abstraction in politics, designed to receive the kicks and cuffs due to

the premier or president. A man of straw, proof against bad-egging and dead-catting.*

ADMIRAL, *n.* That part of a warship which does the talking while the figurehead does the thinking.

ADMIRATION, *n.* Our polite recognition of another's resemblance to ourselves.

ADMONITION, *n.* Gentle reproof, as with a meat-axe. Friendly warning.

Consigned, by way of admonition,
His soul forever to perdition.

Judibras.

ADORE, *v. t.* To venerate expectantly.

ADVICE, *n.* The smallest current coin.

"The man was in such deep distress,"
Said Tom, "that I could do no less
Than give him good advice." Said Jim:
"If less could have been done for him
I know you well enough, my son,
To know that's what you would have done."

Jebel Jocordy.

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AGE, *n.* That period of life in which we compound for the vices that we still cherish by reviling those that we have no longer the enterprise to commit.

AGITATOR, *n.* A statesman who shakes the fruit trees of his neighbors—to dislodge the worms.

AIR, *n.* A nutritious substance supplied by a bountiful Providence for the fattening of the poor.

ALDERMAN, *n.* An ingenious criminal who covers his secret thieving with a pretence of open marauding.

ALIEN, *n.* An American sovereign in his probationary state.

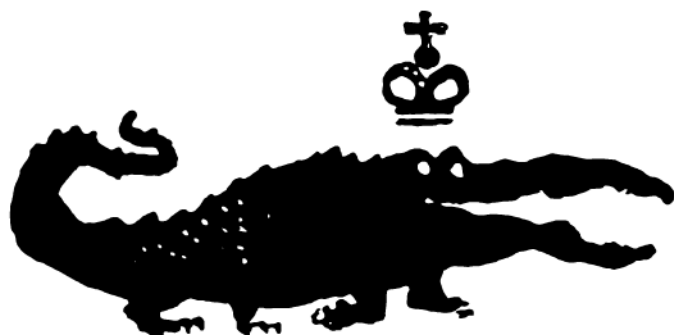
ALLAH, *n.* The Mahometan Supreme Being, as distinguished from the Christian, Jewish, and so forth.

Allah's good laws I faithfully have kept,
And ever for the sins of man have wept;
And sometimes kneeling in the temple I
Have reverently crossed my hands and slept.

Junker Barlow.

ALLIANCE, *n.* In international politics, the union of two thieves who have their hands so deeply inserted

in each other's pocket that they cannot separately plunder a third.



ALLIGATOR, *n.* The crocodile of America, superior in every detail to the crocodile of the effete monarchies of the Old World. Herodotus* says the Indus is, with one exception, the only river that produces crocodiles, but they appear to have gone West and grown up with the other rivers. From the notches on his back the alligator is called a sawrian.*

ALONE, *adj.* In bad company.

In contact, lo! the flint and steel,
By spark and flame, the thought reveal
That he the metal, she the stone,
Had cherished secretly alone.

Booley Fito.

AMBIDEXTROUS, *adj.* Able to pick with equal skill a right-hand pocket or a left.

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AMBITION, *n.* An overmastering desire to be vilified by enemies while living and made ridiculous by friends when dead.

AMNESTY, *n.* The state's magnanimity to those offenders whom it would be too expensive to punish.

ANTIPATHY, *n.* The sentiment inspired by one's friend's friend.

APHORISM, *n.* Predigested wisdom.

The flabby wine-skin of his brain
Yields to some pathologic strain,
And voids from its unstored abysm
The dribble of an aphorism.

"The Mad Philosopher" 1967.

APOLOGIZE, *v. i.* To lay the foundation for a future offence.

APOSTATE, *n.* A leech who, having penetrated the shell of a turtle only to find that the creature has long been dead, deems it expedient to form a new attachment to a fresh turtle.

APOTHECARY, *n.* The physician's accomplice, undertaker's benefactor and grave worm's provider.

When Jove sent blessings to all men that are,
And Mercury conveyed them in a jar,
That friend of tricksters introduced by stealth
Disease for the apothecary's health,
Whose gratitude impelled him to proclaim:
"My deadliest drug shall bear my patron's name!"

G. J.

APPLAUSE, *n.* The echo of a platitude.

ARCHITECT, *n.* One who drafts a plan of your house, and plans a draft of your money.

ARDOR, *n.* The quality that distinguishes love without knowledge.

ARMOR, *n.* The kind of clothing worn by a man whose tailor is a blacksmith.

ARREST, *v. t.* Formally to detain one accused of unusualness.

God made the world in six days and was arrested* on
the seventh.

—*The Unauthorized Version.**

ARTLESSNESS, *n.* A certain engaging quality to which women attain by long study and severe practice upon the admiring male, who is pleased to fancy it resembles the candid simplicity of his young.

B

BABE or **BABY**, *n.* A misshapen creature of no particular age, sex, or condition, chiefly remarkable for the violence of the sympathies and antipathies it excites in others, itself without sentiment or emotion. There have been famous babes; for example, little Moses, from whose adventure in the bulrushes* the Egyptian hierophants* of seven centuries before doubtless derived their idle tale of the child Osiris* being preserved on a floating lotus leaf.

Ere babes were invented
The girls were contented.
Now man is tormented
Until to buy babes he has squandered
His money. And so I have pondered
This thing, and thought may be
'T were better that Baby
The First had been eagled or condored.*

Ro Amil.

BACCHUS, *n.* A convenient deity invented by the ancients as an excuse for getting drunk.

Is public worship, then, a sin,
That for devotions paid to Bacchus

The lictors* dare to run us in,
And resolutely thump and whack us?

Jorace.

BACK, *n.* That part of your friend which it is your privilege to contemplate in your adversity.

BACKBITE, *v. t.* To speak of a man as you find him when he can't find you.

BAIT, *n.* A preparation that renders the hook more palatable. The best kind is beauty.

BAROMETER, *n.* An ingenious instrument which indicates what kind of weather we are having.

BARRACK, *n.* A house in which soldiers enjoy a portion of that of which it is their business to deprive others.

BATTLE, *n.* A method of untying with the teeth a political knot that would not yield to the tongue.

BEAUTY, *n.* The power by which a woman charms a lover and terrifies a husband.

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BEGGAR, *n.* One who has relied on the assistance of his friends.

BELLADONNA, *n.* In Italian a beautiful lady; in English a deadly poison. A striking example of the essential identity of the two tongues.

BENEFACTOR, *n.* One who makes heavy purchases of ingratitude, without, however, materially affecting the price, which is still within the means of all.

BIGOT, *n.* One who is obstinately and zealously attached to an opinion that you do not entertain.

BLANK-VERSE, *n.* Unrhymed iambic pentameters—the most difficult kind of English verse to write acceptably; a kind, therefore, much affected by those who cannot acceptably write any kind.

BORE, *n.* A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

BOTANY, *n.* The science of vegetables—those that are not good to eat, as well as those that are. It deals

largely with their flowers, which are commonly badly designed, inartistic in color, and ill-smelling.

BOUNDARY, *n.* In political geography, an imaginary line between two nations, separating the imaginary rights of one from the imaginary rights of the other.



BRAIN, *n.* An apparatus with which we think that we think. That which distinguishes the man who is content to *be* something from the man who wishes to *do* something. A man of great wealth, or one who has been pitchforked into high station, has commonly such a headful of brain that his neighbors cannot keep their hats on. In our civilization, and under our republican form of government, brain is so highly honoured that it is rewarded by exemption from the cares of office.

BRANDY, *n.* A cordial composed of one part thunder-and-lightning, one part remorse, two parts bloody murder, one part death-hell-and-the-grave

and four parts clarified Satan. Dose, a headful all the time. Brandy is said by Dr. Johnson to be the drink of heroes. Only a hero will venture to drink it.

BRIDE, *n.* A woman with a fine prospect of happiness behind her.

BRUTE, *n.* See **HUSBAND**.



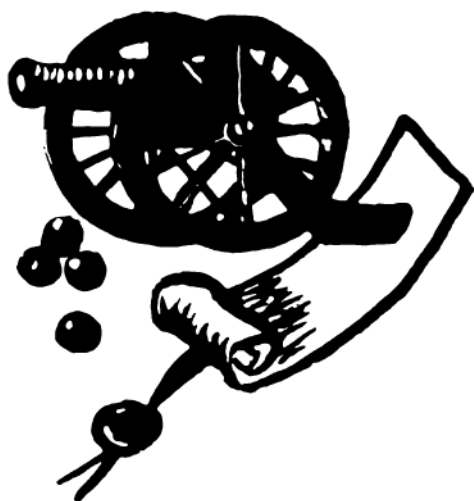
CALAMITY, *n.* A more than commonly plain and unmistakable reminder that the affairs of this life are not of our own ordering. Calamities are of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.

CALLOUS, *adj.* Gifted with great fortitude to bear the evils afflicting another.

When Zeno was told that one of his enemies was no more he was observed to be deeply moved. "What!" said one of his disciples, "you weep at the death of an enemy?" "Ah, 'tis true," replied the great Stoic*; "but you should see me smile at the death of a friend."

CALUMNUS,* *n.* A graduate of the School for Scandal.

CANNIBAL, *n.* A gastronome of the old school who preserves the simple tastes and adheres to the natural diet of the pre-pork period.



CANNON, *n.* An instrument employed in the rectification of national boundaries.

CAVILER, *n.* A critic of our own work.

CEMETERY, *n.* An isolated suburban spot where mourners match lies, poets write at a target and stone-

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cutters spell for a wager. The inscriptions following will serve to illustrate the success attained in these Olympian games:

His virtues were so conspicuous that his enemies, unable to overlook them, denied them, and his friends, to whose loose lives they were a rebuke, represented them as vices. They are here commemorated by his family, who shared them.

In the earth we here prepare a
Place to lay our little Clara.

—*Thomas M. and Mary Frazer.*

P. S.—Gabriel* will raise her.

CHILDHOOD, *n.* The period of human life intermediate between the idiocy of infancy and the folly of youth—two removes from the sin of manhood and three from the remorse of age.

CIRCUS, *n.* A place where horses, ponies and elephants are permitted to see men, women and children acting the fool.

CLAIRVOYANT, *n.* A person, commonly a woman, who has the power of seeing that which is invisible to her patron—namely, that he is a blockhead.

CLERGYMAN, *n.* A man who undertakes the management of our spiritual affairs as a method of bettering his temporal ones.

COMFORT, *n.* A state of mind produced by contemplation of a neighbor's uneasiness.

COMMENDATION, *n.* The tribute that we pay to achievements that resemble, but do not equal, our own.

COMMERCE, *n.* A kind of transaction in which A plunders from B the goods of C, and for compensation B picks the pocket of D of money belonging to E.

COMPROMISE, *n.* Such an adjustment of conflicting interests as gives each adversary the satisfaction of thinking he has got what he ought not to have, and is deprived of nothing except what was justly his due.

CONDOLE, *v.i.* To show that bereavement is a smaller evil than sympathy.

CONFIDANT, CONFIDANTE, *n.* One entrusted by A with the secrets of B, confided by *him* to C.

CONGRATULATION, *n.* The civility of envy.

CONGRESS, *n.* A body of men who meet to repeal laws.

CONNOISSEUR, *n.* A specialist who knows everything about something and nothing about anything else.

An old wine-bibber having been smashed in a railway collision, some wine was poured upon his lips to revive him. "Pauillac, 1873,"* he murmured and died.

CONSERVATIVE, *n.* A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

CONSOLATION, *n.* The knowledge that a better man is more unfortunate than yourself.

CONSUL, *n.* In American politics, a person who having failed to secure an office from the people is given one by the Administration on condition that he leave the country.

CONSULT, *v.t.* To seek another's approval of a course already decided on.

CONTEMPT, *n.* The feeling of a prudent man for an enemy who is too formidable safely to be opposed.

CONVERSATION, *n.* A fair for the display of the minor mental commodities, each exhibitor being too intent upon the arrangement of his own wares to observe those of his neighbor.

CORPORATION, *n.* An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility.

CORSAIR, *n.* A politician of the seas.

COWARD, *n.* One who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

CREDITOR, *n.* One of a tribe of savages dwelling beyond the Financial Straits and dreaded for their desolating incursions.

CUI BOND*? (Latin) What good would that do *me*?

CUNNING, *n.* The faculty that distinguishes a weak animal or person from a strong one. It brings its possessor much mental satisfaction and great material adversity. An Italian proverb says: "The furrier gets the skins of more foxes than asses."

CURIOSITY, *n.* An objectionable quality of the female mind. The desire to know whether or not a woman is cursed with curiosity is one of the most active and insatiable passions of the masculine soul.

CURSE, *v.t.* Energetically to belabor with a verbal slap-stick. This is an operation which in literature, particularly in the drama, is commonly fatal to the victim. Nevertheless, the liability to a cursing is a risk that cuts but a small figure in fixing the rates of life insurance.

CYNIC, *n.* A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. Hence the custom among the Scythians of plucking out a cynic's eyes to improve his vision.

D

DANGER, *n.*

A savage beast which, when it sleeps,
Man girds at and despises,
But takes himself away by leaps
And bounds when it arises.

Ambat Delaso.

DARING, *n.* One of the most conspicuous qualities of a man in security.

DAWN, *n.* The time when men of reason go to bed. Certain old men prefer to rise at about that time, taking a cold bath and a long walk with an empty stomach, and otherwise mortifying the flesh. They then point with pride to these practices as the cause of their sturdy health and ripe years; the truth being that they are hearty and old, not because of their habits, but in spite of them. The reason we find only robust persons doing this thing is that it has killed all the others who have tried it.

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DAY, *n.* A period of twenty-four hours, mostly mis-spent. This period is divided into two parts, the day proper and the night, or day improper—the former devoted to sins of business, the latter consecrated to the other sort. These two kinds of social activity overlap.

DECIDE, *v. i.* To succumb to the preponderance of one set of influences over another set.

A leaf was riven from a tree.
“I mean to fall to earth,” said he.

The west wind, rising, made him veer.
“Eastward,” said he, “I now shall steer.”

The east wind rose with greater force.
Said he: “ ’Twere wise to change my course.”

With equal power they contend.
He said: “My judgment I suspend.”

Down died the winds; the leaf, elate,
Cried: “I’ve decided to fall straight.”

“First thoughts are best?” That’s not the moral;
Just choose your own and we’ll not quarrel.

Howe’er your choice may chance to fall,
You’ll have no hand in it at all.

G. J.

DEFAME, *v. t.* To lie about another. To tell the truth about another.

DEFENCELESS, *adj.* Unable to attack.

DELUSION, *n.* The father of a most respectable family, comprising Enthusiasm, Affection, Self-denial, Faith, Hope, Charity and many other goodly sons and daughters.

All hail, Delusion! Were it not for thee
The world turned topsy-turvy we should see;
For Vice, respectable with cleanly fancies,
Would fly abandoned Virtue's gross advances.

Mumfrey Mappel.

DENTIST, *n.* A prestidigitator who, putting metal into your mouth, pulls coins out of your pocket.

DESTINY, *n.* A tyrant's authority for crime and a fool's excuse for failure.

DIAGNOSIS, *n.* A physician's forecast of disease by the patient's pulse and purse.

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DIARY, *n.* A daily record of that part of one's life which he can relate to himself without blushing.

DICTATOR, *n.* The chief of a nation that prefers the pestilence of despotism to the plague of anarchy.

DICTIONARY, *n.* A malevolent literary device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic. This dictionary, however, is a most useful work.

DIPLOMACY, *n.* The patriotic art of lying for one's country.

DISCUSSION, *n.* A method of confirming others in their errors.

DISTRESS, *n.* A disease incurred by exposure to the prosperity of a friend.

DRAGOON, *n.* A soldier who combines dash and steadiness in so equal measure that he makes his advances on foot and his retreats on horseback.



DUEL, *n.* A formal ceremony preliminary to the reconciliation of two enemies. Great skill is necessary to its satisfactory observance; if awkwardly performed the most unexpected and deplorable consequences sometimes ensue. A long time ago a man lost his life in a duel.

That dueling's a gentlemanly vice
I hold; and wish that it had been my lot
To live my life out in some favored spot—
Some country where it is considered nice
To split a rival like a fish, or slice
A husband like a spud, or with a shot
Bring down a debtor doubled in a knot
And ready to be put upon the ice.
Some miscreants there are, whom I do long
To shoot, or stab, or some such way reclaim
The scurvy rogues to better lives and manners,
I seem to see them now—a mighty throng.
It looks as if to challenge *me* they came,
Jauntily marching with brass bands and banners!

Xamba Q. Dar.

DUTY, *n.* That which sternly impels us in the direction of profit, along the line of desire.

Sir Lavender Portwine, in favor at court,
Was wroth at his master, who'd kissed Lady Port.
His anger provoked him to take the king's head,
But duty prevailed, and he took the king's bread,*
Instead.

G. J.

E

EAVESDROP, *v. i.* Secretly to overhear a catalogue of the crimes and vices of another or yourself.

A lady with one of her ears applied
To an open keyhole heard, inside,
Two female gossips in converse free—
The subject engaging them was she.
“I think,” said one, “and my husband thinks
That she’s a prying, inquisitive minx!”
As soon as no more of it she could hear
The lady, indignant, removed her ear.
“I will not stay,” she said, with a pout,
“To hear my character lied about!”

Gopete Sherany.

ECCENTRICITY, *n.* A method of distinction so cheap that fools employ it to accentuate their incapacity.

ECONOMY, *n.* Purchasing the barrel of whiskey that you do not need for the price of the cow that you cannot afford.

EDIBLE, *adj.* Good to eat, and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.

EDUCATION, *n.* That which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding.

EFFECT, *n.* The second of two phenomena which always occur together in the same order. The first, called a Cause, is said to generate the other—which is no more sensible than it would be for one who has never seen a dog except in pursuit of a rabbit to declare the rabbit the cause of the dog.

ELECTOR, *n.* One who enjoys the sacred privilege of voting for the man of another man's choice.

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ELEGY, *n.* A composition in verse, in which, without employing any of the methods of humor, the writer aims to produce in the reader's mind the dampest kind of dejection. The most famous English example begins somewhat like this:

The cur foretells the knell of parting day;
The loafing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
The wise man homeward plods; I only stay
To fiddle-faddle in a minor key.*

ELOQUENCE, *n.* The art of orally persuading fools that white is the color that it appears to be. It includes the gift of making any color appear white.

EMANCIPATION, *n.* A bondman's change from the tyranny of another to the despotism of himself.

He was a slave; at word he went and came;
His iron collar cut him to the bone.
Then Liberty erased his owner's name,
Tightened the rivets and inscribed his own.

G. J.

ENTERTAINMENT, *n.* Any kind of amusement whose inroads stop short of death by dejection.

ENVELOPE, *n.* The coffin of a document; the scab-

bard of a bill; the husk of a remittance; the bed-gown of a love-letter.

EPAULET, *n.* An ornamented badge, serving to distinguish a military officer from the enemy—that is to say, from the officer of lower rank to whom his death would give promotion.

EPITAPH, *n.* An inscription on a tomb, showing that virtues acquired by death have a retroactive effect. Following is a touching example:

Here lies the bones of Parson Platt,
Wise, pious, humble and all that,
Who showed us life as all should live it;
Let that be said—and God forgive it!

ERUDITION, *n.* Dust shaken out of a book into an empty skull.

So wide his erudition's mighty span,
He knew Creation's origin and plan
And only came by accident to grief—
He thought, poor man, 'twas right to be a thief.

Romach Pute.

ESOTERIC, *adj.* Very particularly abstruse and consummately occult. The ancient philosophies were of two kinds—exoteric, those that the philosophers

themselves could partly understand, and esoteric, those that nobody could understand. It is the latter that have most profoundly affected modern thought and found greatest acceptance in our time.

EXILE, *n.* One who serves his country by residing abroad, yet is not an ambassador.

An English sea-captain, being asked if he had read "The Exile of Erin," replied: "No, sir, but I should like to anchor on it." Years afterwards, when he had been hanged as a pirate after a career of unparalleled atrocities, the following memorandum was found in the ship's log that he had kept at the time of his reply:

Aug. 3d, 1842. Made a joke on the ex-Isle of Erin. Coldly received. War with the whole world!



EXISTENCE, *n.*

A transient, horrible, fantastic dream,
Wherein is nothing yet all things do seem:
From which we're wakened by a friendly nudge
Of our bedfellow Death, and cry: "O fudge?"

F

FAITH, *n.* Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel.

FEMALE, *n.* One of the opposing, or unfair, sex.*

FIDDLE, *n.* An instrument to tickle human ears by friction of a horse's tail on the entrails of a cat.

To Rome said Nero: "If to smoke you turn
I shall not cease to fiddle while you burn."
To Nero Rome replied: "Pray do your worst,
'Tis my excuse that you were fiddling first."

Orm Pludge.

FIDELITY, *n.* A virtue peculiar to those who are about to be betrayed.

FLAG, *n.* A colored rag borne above troops and hoisted on forts and ships. It appears to serve

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the same purpose as certain signs that one sees on vacant lots in London—"Rubbish may be shot here."

FOOL, *n.* A person who pervades the domain of intellectual speculation and diffuses himself through the channels of moral activity. He is omnific, omniform, omnipercipient, omniscient, omnipotent.* He it was who invented letters, printing, the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph, the platitude and the circle of the sciences. He created patriotism and taught the nations war—founded theology, philosophy, law, medicine and Chicago. He established monarchical and republican government. He is from everlasting to everlasting—such as creation's dawn beheld he fooleth now.* In the morning of time he sang upon primitive hills, and in the noonday of existence headed the procession of being. His grandmotherly hand has warmly tucked in the set sun of civilization, and in the twilight he prepared Man's evening meal of milk-and-morality and turns down the covers of the universal grave. And after the rest of us shall have retired for the night of eternal oblivion he will sit up to write a history of human civilization.

FORK, *n.* An instrument used chiefly for the purpose of putting dead animals into the mouth. Formerly the knife was employed for this purpose, and by many

worthy persons is still thought to have many advantages over the other tool, which, however, they do not altogether reject, but use to assist in charging the knife. The immunity of these persons from swift and awful death is one of the most striking proofs of God's mercy to those that hate Him.

FRIENDSHIP, *n.* A ship big enough to carry two in fair weather, but only one in foul.

FUNERAL, *n.* A pageant whereby we attest our respect for the dead by enriching the undertaker, and strengthen our grief by an expenditure that deepens our groans and doubles our tears.

The savage dies—they sacrifice a horse
To bear to happy hunting-grounds the corpse.
Our friends expire—we make the money fly
In hope their souls will chase it to the sky.

Jex Wopley.

FUTURE, *n.* That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured.

G

GALLOWS, *n.* A stage for the performance of miracle plays, in which the leading actor is translated to heaven. In this country the gallows is chiefly remarkable for the number of persons who escape it.

GHOST, *n.* The outward and visible sign of an inward fear.



GOOSE, *n.* A bird that supplies quills for writing. These, by some occult process of nature, are penetrated and suffused with various degrees of the bird's intellectual energies and emotional character, so that when inked and drawn mechanically across paper by a

person called an “author,” there results a very fair and accurate transcript of the fowl’s thought and feeling. The difference in geese, as discovered by this ingenious method, is considerable: many are found to have only trivial and insignificant powers, but some are seen to be very great geese indeed.*

GRAVE, *n.* A place in which the dead are laid to await the coming of the medical student.

H

HABEAS CORPUS. A writ by which a man may be taken out of jail when confined for the wrong crime.

HAND, *n.* A singular instrument worn at the end of the human arm and commonly thrust into somebody’s pocket.

HANDKERCHIEF, *n.* A small square of silk or linen, used in various ignoble offices about the face and

especially serviceable at funerals to conceal the lack of tears. The handkerchief is of recent invention; our ancestors knew nothing of it and intrusted its duties to the sleeve. Shakspeare's introducing it into the play of Othello is an anachronism; Desdemona dried her nose with her skirt, as Dr. Mary Walker and other reformers have done with their coattails in our own day—an evidence that revolutions sometimes go backward.

HAPPINESS, *n.* An agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another.

HARBOR, *n.* A place where ships taking shelter from storms are exposed to the fury of the customs.

HATRED, *n.* A sentiment appropriate to the occasion of another's superiority.

HEARSE, *n.* Death's baby-carriage.



HERMIT, *n.* A person whose vices and follies are not sociable.

HISTORY, *n.* An account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves, and soldiers mostly fools.

HOSPITALITY, *n.* The virtue which induces us to feed and lodge certain persons who are not in need of food and lodging.

HOSTILITY, *n.* A peculiarly sharp and specially applied sense of the earth's overpopulation. Hostility is classed as active and passive; as (respectively) the feeling of a woman for her female friends, and that which she entertains for all the rest of her sex.

HOUSELESS, *adj.* Having paid all taxes on household goods.

I

“I” is the first letter of the alphabet, the first word of the language, the first thought of the mind, the first object of affection. In grammar it is a pronoun of the first person and singular number. Its plural is said to be We, but how there can be more than one myself is doubtless clearer to the grammarians than it is to the author of this incomparable dictionary. Conception of two myselfs is difficult, but fine. The frank yet graceful use of “I” distinguishes a good writer from a bad; the latter carries it with the manner of a thief trying to cloak his loot.

IDIOT, *n.* A member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling. The Idiot’s activity is not confined to any special field of thought or action, but “pervades and regulates the whole.” He has the last word in everything; his decision is unappealable. He sets the fashions of opinion and taste, dictates the limitations of speech and circumscribes conduct with a deadline.

IGNORAMUS, *n.* A person unacquainted with certain kinds of knowledge familiar to yourself, and having certain other kinds that you know nothing about.

IMAGINATION, *n.* A warehouse of facts, with poet and liar in joint ownership.

IMMIGRANT, *n.* An unenlightened person who thinks one country better than another.

IMPIETY, *n.* Your irreverence toward my deity.

IMPUNITY, *n.* Wealth.

INDECISION, *n.*— The chief element of success: “for whereas,” saith Sir Thomas Brewbold, “there is but one way to do nothing and divers ways to do something, whereof, to a surety, only one is the right way, it followeth that he who from indecision standeth still hath not so many chances going astray as he who pusheth forwards”*—a most clear and satisfactory exposition of the matter.

“Your prompt decision to attack,” said General Grant on a certain occasion to General Gordon Granger, “was admirable; you had but five minutes to make up your mind in.”

"Yes, sir," answered the victorious subordinate, "it is a great thing to know exactly what to do in an emergency. When in doubt whether to attack or retreat I never hesitate a moment—I toss up a copper."

"Do you mean to say that's what you did this time?"

"Yes, General; but for Heaven's sake don't reprimand me: I disobeyed the coin."

INDIFFERENT, *adj.* Imperfectly sensible to distinctions among things.

"You, tiresome man!" cried Indolentio's wife,

"You've grown indifferent to all in life."

"Indifferent?" he drawled with a slow smile;

"I would be, dear, but it is not worth while."

Apuleius M. Gokul.

INFIDEL, *n.* In New York, one who does not believe in the Christian religion; in Constantinople, one who does. (See **GIAOUR**.) A kind of scoundrel imperfectly reverent of, and niggardly contributory to, divines, ecclesiastics, popes, parsons, canons, monks, mollahs, voodoos, presbyters, hierophants, prelates, obeah-men, abbes, nuns, missionaries, exhorters, deacons, friars, hadjis, high-priests, muezzins, brahmins, medicine-men, confessors, eminences, elders, primates, prebendaries, pilgrims, prophets, imaums,

beneficiaries, clerks, vicars-choral, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, preachers, padres, abbesses, caloyers, palmers, curates, patriarch, bonzes, santons, beadsmen, canonesses, residentiaries, diocesans, deans, subdeans, rural deans, abdals, charm-sellers, archdeacons, heirarchs, class-leaders, incumbents, capitulars, sheiks, talapoins, postulants, scribes, gooroos, precentors, beadles, fakeers, sextons, reverences, revivalists, cenobites, perpetual curates, chaplains, mudjoes, readers, novices, vicars, pastors, rabbis, ulemas, lamas, sacristans, vergers, dervishes, lectors, church wardens, cardinals, prioresses, suffrageants, acolytes, rectors, curés, sophists, muftis and pumpums.*

INJURY, *n.* An offense next in degree of enormity to a slight.

INJUSTICE, *n.* A burden which of all those that we load upon others and carry ourselves is lightest in the hands and heaviest upon the back.

INSURRECTION, *n.* An unsuccessful revolution. Disaffection's failure to substitute misrule for bad government.

INTERPRETER, *n.* One who enables two persons of different languages to understand each other by

repeating to each what it would have been to the interpreter's advantage for the other to have said.

INVENTOR, *n.* A person who makes an ingenious arrangement of wheels, levers and springs, and believes it civilization.

J

JUSTICE, *n.* A commodity which in a more or less adulterated condition the State sells to the citizen as a reward for his allegiance, taxes and personal service.

K

KILL, *v. t.* To create a vacancy without nominating a successor.

KILT, *n.* A costume sometimes worn by Scotchmen in America and Americans in Scotland.

KINDNESS, *n.* A brief preface to ten volumes of exaction.

KLEPTOMANIAC, *n.* A rich thief.

KORAN, *n.* A book which the Mohammedans foolishly believe to have been written by divine inspiration, but which Christians know to be a wicked imposture, contradictory to the Holy Scriptures.

L

LABOR, *n.* One of the processes by which A acquires property for B.

LAWFUL, *adj.* Compatible with the will of a judge having jurisdiction.

LAWYER, *n.* One skilled in circumvention of the law.

LAZINESS, *n.* Unwarranted repose of manner in a person of low degree.

LEARNING, *n.* The kind of ignorance distinguishing the studious.

LEXICOGRAPHER, *n.* A pestilent fellow who, under the pretense of recording some particular stage in the development of a language, does what he can to arrest its growth, stiffen its flexibility and mechanize its methods. For your lexicographer, having written his dictionary, comes to be considered “as one having authority,” whereas his function is only to make a record, not to give a law. The natural servility of the human understanding having invested him with judicial power, surrenders its right of reason and submits itself to a chronicle as if it were a statute. Let the dictionary (for example) mark a good word as “obsolete” or “obsolescent” and few men thereafter venture to use it, whatever their need of it and however desirable its restoration to favor—whereby the process of impoverishment is accelerated and speech decays. On the contrary, the bold and discerning writer who, recognizing the truth that language must grow by innovation if it grow at all, makes new words and uses the old in an unfamiliar sense, has no following and is tartly reminded that “it isn’t in the dictionary”—although down to the time of the first lexicographer (Heaven forgive him!) no author ever had used a word that *was* in the dictionary. In the golden prime and high noon of English speech; when from the lips of the great Elizabethans* fell words that made their

own meaning and carried it in their very sound; when a Shakspeare and a Bacon* were possible, and the language now rapidly perishing at one and slowly renewed at the other was in vigorous growth and hardy preservation—sweeter than honey and stronger than a lion*—the lexicographer was a person unknown, the dictionary a creation which his Creator had not created him to create.

God said: "Let Spirit perish into Form,"
And lexicographers arose, a swarm!
Though fled and left her clothing, which they took,
And catalogued each garment in a book.
Now, from her leafy covert when she cries:
"Give me my clothes and I'll return," they rise
And scan the list, and say without compassion:
"Excuse us—they are mostly out of Fashion."

Sigismund Smith.

LIAR, *n.* A lawyer with a roving commission.

LIFE, *n.* A spiritual pickle preserving the body from decay. We live in daily apprehension of its loss; yet when lost it is not missed. The question, "Is life worth living?" has been much discussed; particularly by those who think it is not, many of whom have written at great length in support of their view and by careful observance of the laws of health enjoyed for long terms of years the honors of successful controversy.

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“Life’s not worth living, and that’s the truth,”
Carelessly caroled the golden youth.
In manhood still he maintained that view
And held it more strongly the older he grew.
When kicked by a jackass at eighty-three,
“Go fetch me a surgeon at once!” cried he.

Han Soper.

LONGEVITY, *n.* Uncommon extention of the fear of death.



LOVE, *n.* A temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influences under which he incurred the disorder. This disease, like *caries* and many other ailments, is prevalent only among civilized races living under artificial conditions; barbarous nations breathing pure air and eating simple food enjoy immunity from its ravages. It is sometimes fatal, but more frequently to the physician than to the patient.

M

MAD, *adj.* Affected with a high degree of intellectual independence; not conforming to standards of thought, speech and action derived by the conformants from study of themselves; at odds with the majority; in short, unusual. It is noteworthy that persons are pronounced mad by officials destitute of evidence that themselves are sane. For illustration, this present (and illustrious) lexicographer is no firmer in the faith of his own sanity than is any inmate of any madhouse in the land; yet for aught he knows to the contrary, instead of the lofty occupation that seems to him to be engaging his powers he may really be beating his hands against the window bars of an asylum and declaring himself Noah Webster,* to the innocent delight of many thoughtless spectators.

MAGNET, *n.* Something acted upon by magnetism.

MAGNETISM, *n.* Something acting upon a magnet.

The two definitions immediately foregoing are condensed from the works of one thousand eminent

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scientists, who have illuminated the subject with a great white light, to the inexpressible advancement of human knowledge.

MALE, *n.* A member of the unconsidered, or negligible sex. The male of the human race is commonly known (to the female) as Mere Man. The genus has two varieties: good providers and bad providers.

MALEFACTOR, *n.* The chief factor in the progress of the human race.

MAN, *n.* An animal so lost in rapturous contemplation of what he thinks he is as to overlook what he indubitably ought to be. His chief occupation is extermination of other animals and his own species, which, however, multiplies with such insistent rapidity as to infest the whole habitable earth and Canada.

MARRIAGE, *n.* The state or condition of a community consisting of a master, a mistress and two slaves, making in all, two.

MARTYR, *n.* One who moves along the line of least reluctance to a desired death.

MATERIAL, *adj.* Having an actual existence, as distinguished from an imaginary one. Important.

Material things I know, or feel, or see;
All else is immaterial to me.

Jamarach Holobom.

ME, *pro.* The objectionable case of I.* The personal pronoun in English has three cases, the dominative, the objectionable and the oppressive. Each is all three.

MEDAL, *n.* A small metal disk given as a reward for virtues, attainments or services more or less authentic.

MENDACIOUS, *adj.* Addicted to rhetoric.

MERCHANT, *n.* One engaged in a commercial pursuit. A commercial pursuit is one in which the thing pursued is a dollar.

MINE, *adj.* Belonging to me if I can hold or seize it.

MINISTER, *n.* An agent of a higher power with a lower responsibility. In diplomacy an officer sent into a foreign country as the visible embodiment of his

sovereign's hostility. His principal qualification is a degree of plausible inveracity next below that of an ambassador.

MINOR, *adj.* Less objectionable.

MISFORTUNE, *n.* The kind of fortune that never misses.

MONEY, *n.* A blessing that is of no advantage to us excepting when we part with it. An evidence of culture and a passport to polite society. Supportable property.

MONUMENT, *n.* A structure intended to commemorate something which either needs no commemoration or cannot be commemorated.

MORAL, *adj.* Conforming to a local and mutable standard of right. Having the quality of general expediency.

MOUTH, *n.* In man, the gateway to the soul; in woman, the outlet of the heart.

N

NEIGHBOR, *n.* One whom we are commanded to love as ourselves,* and who does all he knows how to make us disobedient.

NOISE, *n.* A stench in the ear. Undomesticated music. The chief product and authenticating sign of civilization.

NONSENSE, *n.* The objections that are urged against this excellent dictionary.

O

OBSOLETE, *adj.* No longer used by the timid. Said chiefly of words. A word which some lexicographer has marked obsolete is ever thereafter an object of

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dread and loathing to the fool writer, but if it is a good word and has no exact modern equivalent equally good, it is good enough for the good writer. Indeed, a writer's attitude toward "obsolete" word is as true a measure of his literary ability as anything except the character of his work. A dictionary of obsolete and obsolescent words would not only be singularly rich in strong and sweet parts of speech; it would add large possessions to the vocabulary of every competent writer who might not happen to be a competent reader.

OCCIDENT, *n.* The part of the world lying west (or east) of the Orient. It is largely inhabited by Christians, a powerful sub-tribe of the Hypocrites, whose principal industries are murder and cheating, which they are pleased to call "war" and "commerce." These, also, are the principal industries of the Orient.

OCEAN, *n.* A body of water occupying about two-thirds of a world made for man—who has no gills.

OLD, *adj.* In that stage of usefulness which is not inconsistent with general inefficiency, as an *old man*. Discredited by lapse of time and offensive to the popular taste, as an *old book*.

"Old books? The devil take them!" Goby said.

"Fresh every day must be my books and bread."

Nature herself approves the Goby rule
And gives us every moment a fresh fool.

Harley Shum.

OMEN, *n.* A sign that something will happen if nothing happens.

ONCE, *adv.* Enough.

OPPORTUNITY, *n.* A favorable occasion for grasping a disappointment.

OPTIMISM, *n.* The doctrine, or belief, that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly, everything good, especially the bad, and everything right that is wrong. It is held with greatest tenacity by those most accustomed to the mischance of falling into adversity, and is most acceptably expounded with the grin that apes a smile. Being a blind faith, it is inaccessible to the light of disproof—an intellectual disorder, yielding to no treatment but death. It is hereditary, but fortunately not contagious.

OPTIMIST, *n.* A proponent of the doctrine that black is white.

A pessimist applied to God for relief.

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“Ah, you wish me to restore your hope and cheerfulness,” said God.

“No,” replied the petitioner, “I wish you to create something that would justify them.”

“The world is all created,” said God, “but you have overlooked something—the mortality of the optimist.”

OTHERWISE, *adv.* No better.

OUTDO, *v. t.* To make an enemy.

OVERWORK, *n.* A dangerous disorder affecting high public functionaries who want to go fishing.

P

PAIN, *n.* An uncomfortable frame of mind that may have a physical basis in something that is being done to the body, or may be purely mental, caused by the good fortune of another.

PAINTING, *n.* The art of protecting flat surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic.

Formerly, painting and sculpture were combined in the same work: the ancients painted their statues. The only present alliance between the two arts is that the modern painter chisels his patrons.

PANTOMIME, *n.* A play in which the story is told without violence to the language. The least disagreeable form of dramatic action.

PASSPORT, *n.* A document treacherously inflicted upon a citizen going abroad, exposing him as an alien and pointing him out for special reprobation and outrage.

PAST, *n.* That part of Eternity with some small fraction of which we have a slight and regrettable acquaintance. A moving line called the Present parts it from an imaginary period known as the Future. These two grand divisions of Eternity, of which the one is continually effacing the other, are entirely unlike. The one is dark with sorrow and disappointment, the other bright with prosperity and joy. The Past is the region of sobs, the Future is the realm of song. In the one crouches Memory, clad in sackcloth and ashes, mumbling penitential prayer; in the sunshine of the

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other Hope flies with a free wing, beckoning to temples of success and bowers of ease. Yet the Past is the Future of yesterday, the Future is the Past of tomorrow. They are one—the knowledge and the dream.

PATRIOTISM, *n.* Combustible rubbish ready to the torch of any one ambitious to illuminate his name.

In Dr. Johnson's famous dictionary* patriotism is defined as the last resort of a scoundrel. With all due respect to an enlightened but inferior lexicographer I beg to submit that it is the first.

PEACE, *n.* In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

PENITENT, *adj.* Undergoing or awaiting punishment.

PESSIMISM, *n.* A philosophy forced upon the convictions of the observer by the disheartening prevalence of the optimist with his scarecrow hope and his unsightly smile.

PHYSICIAN, *n.* One upon whom we set our hopes when ill and our dogs when well.

PHYSIOGNOMY, *n.* The art of determining the character of another by the resemblances and differences between his face and our own, which is the standard of excellence.

“There is no art,” says Shakspeare, foolish man,
“To read the mind’s construction in the face.”*
The physiognomists his portrait scan,
And say: “How little wisdom here we trace!
He knew his face disclosed his mind and heart,
So, in his own defence, denied our art.”

Lavatar Shunk.



PIRACY, *n.* Commerce without its folly-swaddles, just as God made it.

PITY, *n.* A failing sense of exemption, inspired by contrast.

PLAGIARISM, *n.* A literary coincidence compounded of a discreditable priority and an honorable subsequence.

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PLAN, *v. t.* To bother about the best method of accomplishing an accidental result.

PLATONIC, *adj.* Pertaining to the philosophy of Socrates.* Platonic Love is a fool's name for the affection between a disability and a frost.

POKER, *n.* A game said to be played with cards for some purpose to this lexicographer unknown.

POLICE, *n.* An armed force for protection and participation.

POLITICS, *n.* A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage.

PREFERENCE, *n.* A sentiment, or frame of mind, induced by the erroneous belief that one thing is better than another.

An ancient philosopher, expounding his conviction that life is no better than death, was asked by a disciple why, then, he did not die. "Because," he replied. "death is no better than life."

It is longer.

PREJUDICE, *n.* A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

PREROGATIVE, *n.* A sovereign's right to do wrong.

PRESCRIPTION, *n.* A physician's guess at what will best prolong the situation with least harm to the patient.

PRESENT, *n.* That part of eternity dividing the domain of disappointment from the realm of hope.

PRESIDENT, *n.* The leading figure in a small group of men of whom—and of whom only—it is positively known that immense numbers of their countrymen did not want any of them for President.

If that's an honor surely 'tis a greater
To have been a simple and undamned spectator.
Behold in me a man of mark and note
Whom no elector e'er denied a vote!—
An undiscredited, unhooted gent
Who might, for all we know, be President
By acclamation. Cheer, ye varlets, cheer—
I'm passing with a wide and open ear!

Jonathan Fomry.

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PRICE, *n.* Value, plus a reasonable sum for the wear and tear of conscience in demanding it.

PROOF, *n.* Evidence having a shade more of plausibility than of unlikelihood. The testimony of two credible witnesses as opposed to that of only one.

PROOFREADER, *n.* A malefactor who atones for making your writing nonsense by permitting the compositor to make it unintelligible.

PROPERTY, *n.* Any material thing, having no particular value, that may be held by A against the cupidity of B. Whatever gratifies the passion for possession in one and disappoints it in all others. The object of man's brief rapacity and long indifference.

PROVIDENTIAL, *adj.*—Unexpectedly and conspicuously beneficial to the person so describing it.

PUSH, *n.* One of the two things mainly conducive to success, especially in politics. The other is Pull.



QUEEN, *n.* A woman by whom the realm is ruled when there is a king, and through whom it is ruled when there is not.

QUILL, *n.* An implement of torture yielded by a goose and commonly wielded by an ass. This use of the quill is now obsolete, but its modern equivalent, the steel pen, is wielded by the same everlasting Presence.

QUOTATION, *n.* The act of repeating erroneously the words of another. The words erroneously repeated.

Intent on making his quotation truer,
He sought the page infallible of Brewer,*
Then made a solemn vow that he would be
Condemned eternally. Ah, me, ah, me!

Stumpo Gaker.

R

RADICALISM, *n.* The conservatism of tomorrow injected into the affairs of today.

RAILROAD, *n.* The chief of many mechanical devices enabling us to get away from where we are to where we are no better off. For this purpose the railroad is held in highest favor by the optimist, for it permits him to make the transit with great expedition.

RATIONAL, *adj.* Devoid of all delusions save those of observation, experience and reflection.

REALISM, *n.* The art of depicting nature as it is seen by toads. The charm suffusing a landscape painted by a mole, or a story written by a measuring-worm.

REALITY, *n.* The dream of a mad philosopher. That which would remain in the cupel if one should assay a phantom. The nucleus of a vacuum.

REALLY, *adv.* Apparently.

REAR, *n.* In American military matters, that exposed part of the army that is nearest to Congress.

REASON, *n.* Propensitate of prejudice.

REASON, *v. i.* To weigh probabilities in the scales of desire.

REBEL, *n.* A proponent of a new misrule who has failed to establish it.

RECOLLECT, *v.* To recall with additions something not previously known.

RECONCILIATION, *n.* A suspension of hostilities. An armed truce for the purpose of digging up the dead.

REFLECTION, *n.* An action of the mind whereby we obtain a clearer view of our relation to the things

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of yesterday and are able to avoid the perils that we shall not again encounter.

RELIGION, *n.* A daughter of Hope and Fear, explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable.

REPUBLIC, *n.* A nation in which, the thing governing and the thing governed being the same, there is only a permitted authority to enforce an optional obedience. In a republic the foundation of public order is the ever lessening habit of submission inherited from ancestors who, being truly governed, submitted because they had to. There are as many kinds of republics as there are gradations between the despotism whence they came and the anarchy whither they lead.

REVELATION, *n.* A famous book in which St. John the Divine* concealed all that he knew. The revealing is done by the commentators, who know nothing.

REVIEW, *v. t.*

To set your wisdom (holding not a doubt of it,
Although in truth there's neither bone nor skin to it)

At work upon a book, and so read out of it
The qualities that you have first read into it.

RIME, *n.* Agreeing sounds in the terminals of verse, mostly bad. The verses themselves, as distinguished from prose, mostly dull. Usually (and wickedly) spelled "rhyme."

RITE, *n.* A religious or semi-religious ceremony fixed by law, precept or custom, with the essential oil of sincerity carefully squeezed out of it.

ROAD, *n.* A strip of land along which one may pass from where it is too tiresome to be to where it is futile to go.

All roads, howsoe'er they diverge, lead to Rome,
Whence, thank the good Lord, at least one leads back home.

Borey the Bald.

ROBBER, *n.* A candid man of affairs.

It is related of Voltaire* that one night he and some traveling companions lodged at a wayside inn. The surroundings were suggestive, and after supper they agreed to tell robber stories in turn. When Voltaire's turn came he said: "Once there was a Farmer-General of the Revenues." Saying nothing more, he was encouraged to continue. "That," he said, "is the story."

RUMOR, *n.* A favorite weapon of the assassins of character.

Sharp, irresistible by mail or shield,
By guard unparried as by flight unstayed,
O serviceable Rumor, let me wield
Against my enemy no other blade.
His be the terror of a foe unseen,
His the inutile hand upon the hilt,
And mine the deadly tongue, long, slender, keen,
Hinting a rumor of some ancient guilt.
So shall slay the wretch without a blow,
Spare me to celebrate his overthrow,
And nurse my valor for another foe.

Joel Buxter.



SAINT, *n.* A dead sinner revised and edited.

The Duchess of Orleans relates that the irreverent old calumniator, Marshal Villeroi, who in his youth had known St. Francis de Sales, said, on hearing him called saint: "I am delighted to hear that Monsieur de Sales is a saint. He was fond of saying indelicate things, and used to cheat at cards. In other respects he was a perfect gentleman, though a fool."

SATAN, *n.* One of the Creator's lamentable mistakes, repented in sashcloth and axes.* Being instated as an archangel, Satan made himself multifariously objectionable and was finally expelled from Heaven. Halfway in his descent he paused, bent his head in thought a moment and at last went back.

"There is one favor that I should like to ask," said he.

"Name it."

"Man, I understand, is about to be created. He will need laws."

"What, wretch! You, his appointed adversary, charged from the dawn of eternity with hatred of his soul—you ask for the right to make his laws?"

"Pardon; what I have to ask is that he be permitted to make them himself."

It was so ordered.

SAW, *n.* A trite popular saying, or proverb. (Figurative and colloquial.) So called because it makes its way into a wooden head. Following are examples of old saws fitted with new teeth.

A penny saved is a penny to squander.

A man is known by the company that he organizes.

A bad workman quarrels with the man who calls him that.

A bird in the hand is worth what it will bring.

Better late than before anybody has invited you.

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Example is better than following it.

Half a loaf is better than a whole one if there is much else.

Think twice before you speak to a friend in need.

What is worth doing is worth the trouble of asking
somebody to do it.

Least said is soonest disavowed.

He laughs best who laughs least.

Speak of the Devil and he will hear about it.

Of two evils choose to be the least.

Strike while your employer has a big contract.

Where there's a will there's a won't.*

SCRIBBLER, *n.* A professional writer whose views are antagonistic to one's own.

SCRIPTURES, *n.* The sacred books of our holy religion, as distinguished from the false and profane writings on which all other faiths are based.

SELF-ESTEEM, *n.* An erroneous appraisalment.

SELF-EVIDENT, *adj.* Evident to one's self and to nobody else.

SELFISH, *adj.* Devoid of consideration for the selfishness of others.

SLANG, *n.* The grunt of the human hog (*Pignoramus intolerabilis*)* with an audible memory. The speech of one who utters with his tongue what he thinks with his ear, and feels the pride of a creator in accomplishing the feat of a parrot. A means (under Providence) of setting up as a wit without a capital of sense.

SORCERY, *n.* The ancient prototype and forerunner of political influence. It was, however, deemed less respectable and some times was punished by torture and death. Augustine Nicholas* relates that a poor peasant who had been accused of sorcery was put to the torture to compel a confession. After enduring a few gentle agonies the suffering simpleton admitted his guilt, but naively asked his tormentors if it were not possible to be a sorcerer without knowing it.

SUCCESS, *n.* The one unpardonable sin against one's fellows. In literature, and particularly in poetry, the elements of success are exceedingly simple, and are admirably set forth in the following lines by the reverend Father Gassalasca Jape, entitled, for some mysterious reason, "John A. Joyce."

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The bard who would prosper must carry a book,
Do his thinking in prose and wear
A crimson cravat, a far-away look
And a head of hexameter hair.
Be thin in your thought and your body'll be fat;
If you wear your hair long you needn't your hat.

SYLLOGISM, *n.* A logical formula consisting of a major and a minor assumption and an inconsequent.



TAKE, *v. t.* To acquire, frequently by force but preferably by stealth.

TALK, *v. t.* To commit an indiscretion without temptation, from an impulse without purpose.

TELEPHONE, *n.* An invention of the devil which abrogates some of the advantages of making a disagreeable person keep his distance.

TELESCOPE, *n.* A device having a relation to the eye similar to that of the telephone to the ear, enabling distant objects to plague us with a multitude of needless details. Luckily it is unprovided with a bell summoning us to the sacrifice.

TRUCE, *n.* Friendship.

TRUTH, *n.* An ingenious compound of desirability and appearance. Discovery of truth is the sole purpose of philosophy, which is the most ancient occupation of the human mind and has a fair prospect of existing with increasing activity to the end of time.

TRUTHFUL, *adj.* Dumb and illiterate.

TURKEY, *n.* A large bird whose flesh when eaten on certain religious anniversaries has the peculiar property of attesting piety and gratitude.* Incidentally, it is pretty good eating.

TWICE, *adv.* Once too often.

TYPE, *n.* Pestilent bits of metal suspected of destroy-

ing civilization and enlightenment, despite their obvious agency in this incomparable dictionary.

U

UGLINESS, *n.* A gift of the gods to certain women, entailing virtue without humility.

UN-AMERICAN, *adj.* Wicked, intolerable, heathenish.

V

VALOR, *n.* A soldierly compound of vanity, duty and the gambler's hope.

"Why have you halted?" roared the commander of a division at Chickamauga, who had ordered a charge. "Move forward, sir, at once."

"General," said the commander of the delinquent brigade, "I am persuaded that any further display

of valor by my troops will bring them into collision with the enemy.”

VOTE, *n.* The instrument and symbol of a free-man’s power to make a fool of himself and a wreck of his country.



WALL STREET, *n.* A symbol of sin for every devil to rebuke. That Wall Street is a den of thieves is a belief that serves every unsuccessful thief in place of a hope in Heaven. Even the great and good Andrew Carnegie* has made his profession of faith in the matter.

Carnegie the dauntless has uttered his call
To battle: “The brokers are parasites all!”
Carnegie, Carnegie, you’ll never prevail;
Keep the wind of your slogan to belly your sail,
Go back to your isle of perpetual brume,*
Silence your pibroch, doff* tartan and plume:
Ben Lomond is calling his son from the fray—
Fly, fly from the region of Wall Street away!
While still you’re possessed of a single baubee*
(I wish it were pledged to endowment of me)

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'Twere wise to retreat from the wars of finance
Lest its value decline ere your credit advance.
For a man 'twixt a king of finance and the sea,
Carnegie, Carnegie, your tongue is too free!

Anonymus Bink.

WAR, *n.* A by-product of the arts of peace. The most menacing political condition is a period of international amity. The student of history who has not been taught to expect the unexpected may justly boast himself inaccessible to the light. "In time of peace prepare for war" has a deeper meaning than is commonly discerned; it means, not merely that all things earthly have an end—that change is the one immutable and eternal law—but that the soil of peace is thickly sown with seeds of war and singularly suited to their germination and growth.

WEDDING, *n.* A ceremony at which two persons undertake to become one, one undertakes to become nothing, and nothing undertakes to become supportable.

WHITE, *adj.* and *n.* Black.

WIT, *n.* The salt with which the American humorist spoils his intellectual cookery by leaving it out.

WITCH, *n.* (1) An ugly and repulsive old woman, in a wicked league with the devil. (2) A beautiful and attractive young woman, in wickedness a league beyond the devil.

WITTICISM, *n.* A sharp and clever remark, usually quoted, and seldom noted; what the Philistine is pleased to call a "joke."

WOMAN, *n.* An animal usually living in the vicinity of Man, and having a rudimentary susceptibility to domestication. It is credited by many of the elder zoölogists with a certain vestigial docility acquired in a former state of seclusion, but naturalists of the postsusananthony period,* having no knowledge of the seclusion, deny the virtue and declare that such as creation's dawn beheld, it roareth now. The species is the most widely distributed of all beasts of prey, infesting all habitable parts of the globe, from Greenland's spicy mountains to India's moral strand.* The popular name (wolfman) is incorrect, for the creature is of the cat kind. The woman is lithe and graceful in its movements, especially the American variety (*Felis pugnans*)*, is omnivorous and can be taught not to talk.—*Balthasar Pober.*

Y

YEAR, *n.* A period of three hundred and sixty-five disappointments.

Z

ZEAL, *n.* A certain nervous disorder afflicting the young and inexperienced. A passion that goeth before a sprawl.*

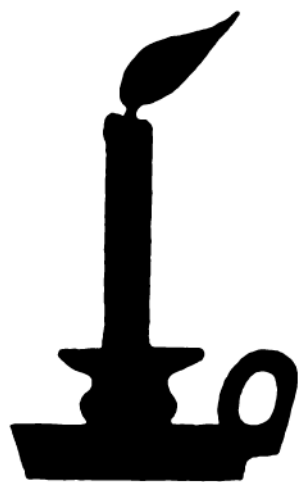
When Zeal sought Gratitude for his reward
He went away exclaiming: "O my Lord!"
"What do you want?" the Lord asked, bending down.
"An ointment for my cracked and bleeding crown."

Jum Coople.

ZEUS, *n.* The chief of Grecian gods, adored by the Romans as Jupiter and by the modern Ameri-

cans as God, Gold, Mob and Dog. Some explorers who have touched upon the shores of America, and one who professes to have penetrated a considerable distance into the interior, have thought that these four names stand for as many distinct deities, but in his monumental work on *Surviving Faiths*, Frumpp insists that the natives are monotheists, each having no other god than himself, whom he worships under many sacred names.

КОММЕНТАРИИ



Комментарии к произведениям Амброза Бирса по необходимости должны быть предварены кратким обзором событий Гражданской войны в США 1861—1865 гг.

В XIX в. рабовладение в Америке превратилось в важный политический и экономический фактор. До этого многие полагали, что постепенное освобождение рабов повсеместно упразднит это зло. Однако быстрое развитие хлопководства, сахарной и табачной промышленности сделало рабство весьма доходным.

В начале века — к 1818 г. — в стране было одиннадцать свободных штатов и десять рабовладельческих. Принятие в союз Алабамы и Миссури (рабовладельческие штаты), с одной стороны, и Мэна (свободный штат), с другой, не нарушило этого равновесия. Кроме того, Конгресс постановил, что рабство отменяется на территории Луизианы (к северу от $36^{\circ}30'$ с. ш.). Вместе с тем, любой вопрос, связанный с рабовладением, вызывал в Конгрессе жаркие споры — рабство уже давно поделило страну на два лагеря: оно подвергалось ожесточенным нападкам одних и не менее страстно защищалось другими.

Со всей остротой проблема рабства встала к середине XIX в., когда США расширили свои границы и увеличили свои владения более чем на 900 тыс. кв. миль. Рабство грозило распространиться на аннексированный Техас, на отвоеванную у Мексики Калифорнию и другие юго-западные территории (ныне штаты Невада, Юта, Нью-Мексико). В Конгрессе бурно обсуждался вопрос о том, должно ли рабовладение быть разрешено на новых территориях. Северяне указывали, что рабовладение причиняет вред свободному предпринимательству и оскорбляет моральное чувство граждан. Южане, со своей стороны, считали, что сложившийся рабовладельческий уклад «патриархальнее», гуманнее, чем капиталистическая система Севера. Создавшееся положение ставило под угрозу единство Союза.

Разрыв произошел, когда президентом США был избран Авраам Линкольн, «чьи взгляды и цели враждебны рабовладению», как заявил в Конгрессе представитель Южной Каролины, штата, возглавившего движение за отделение (secession) Юга от Союза (иногда войну Севера и Юга называли War of Secession). К Южной Каролине присоединились другие штаты так называемого «крайнего Юга» (deep South): Миссисипи, Алабама, Джорджия, Теннесси и др. — всего семь штатов, создавших Конфедерацию Американских Штатов (Южную Конфедерацию). Вскоре к ним примкнули еще четыре штата Юга.

При этом Юг не был един: даже на крайнем Юге оставались группы людей, чрезвычайно враждебно настроенные по отношению к Конфедерации. Так, в Северной Каролине невозможно было ввести воинскую повинность, а в Теннесси в ряды северных войск вступило больше людей, чем в каком-либо округе на Севере.

Кампании Гражданской войны проходили в основном в долине реки Миссисипи и в штате Виргиния, а также в районе атлантического побережья. Война принесла американскому народу много страданий, она истощила страну — пол-миллиона погибших, юг оказался экономически обессиленным, негры были освобождены без земли, что не дало им реальной свободы.

В произведениях Амброза Бирса Гражданская война предстает перед нами в особом ракурсе. В них не обсуждаются политика, экономика, история. Бирса волнуют общие этические проблемы: доблесть, верность долгу. Он патриот: Соединенные Штаты должны быть единой страной. Южане решили отколоться, они подняли мятеж, начали братоубийственную войну. Они будут разбиты. Такой подход, такое осмысление войны определило характер его военных новелл — в основном, это психологические зарисовки, описывающие состояние духа человека в экстремальных, как сказали бы теперь, ситуациях.

В стилистическом отношении особого упоминания требует «Словарь Сатаны» (печатается в

сокращении). В нем Бирсом широко используется игра слов, основанная на многозначности: например, глагол *find* имеет прямое значение «находить» и переносное «считать», «полагать»; бирсовская дефиниция слова *backbite* основана на противопоставлении этих двух значений глагола *find*; см. также сочетание *unfair sex* (*vs. fair sex*) в объяснении к слову *female*; разные значения слова *chisel* — «ваять» и «надувать» в дефиниции слова *painting*. Игра слов в статье *malefactor* обеспечивается разложением его на две переосмысленные основы *male + factor*. Игрой слов является сравнение в объяснении к слову *railroad*: *from where we are to where we are no better off*.

В ряде случаев юмористический эффект достигается ассоциацией с разговорными клише (или же штампами литературно-книжной речи), например, к слову *once* дается лаконичное определение *enough* (ср. с выражением *once is enough*, традиционно употребляемым, когда говорят о чем-то малоприятном); *cp. twice = once too often*. Обыгрывание клише является одним из часто встречающихся в «Словаре» приемов; ср. также *least reluctance* в определении к слову *martyr* с клише *least resistance*. Еще одним широко употребительным приемом является игра с именами собственными. В «Словаре», наряду с подлинными высказываниями (например, Сократа и Вольтера), приводятся вымышленные «глубокие мысли», принадле-

жащие вымышленным лицам, имена которых по звучанию или написанию ассоциируются с известными (Jogase от Hogase) либо своим явно нелепым звучанием создают откровенно фарсовый эффект: Gassalasca Jape, Anonymus Bink. С похожим явлением читатель встретится и в «Баснях» (см. коммент. к с. 399).

В «Словаре» встречаются и другие, заслуживающие упоминания, приемы, например, стилистические повторы, употребление одного слова вместо другого, похожего: *me* — *objectionable case* вместо *objective case*.

В нарушение словарной стилистики Бирс иногда иллюстрирует значения слов притчами (см., например, *optimist*, *preference*, *robber*).

В предлагаемых ниже комментариях приводятся источники цитат, расшифровываются аллюзии, характеризуются реалии. В отдельных случаях, когда это требуется для более глубокого понимания текста, приводятся географические и биографические данные.

Лексико-фразеологический материал разъясняется тогда, когда в тексте встречаются отсутствующие в «Англо-русском словаре» под редакцией В. К. Мюллера (издание 17-ое, исправленное и дополненное) единицы или когда затруднен перевод отдельных оборотов. Транскрипция собственных имен указывается лишь в случаях расхождения с нормой произношения.

A HORSEMAN IN THE SKY

К с. 41

western Virginia — на западе штата Виргиния; Виргиния, присоединившаяся к Конфедерации Южных штатов после конфликта при форте Самтер (см. Предисловие), граничила на Западе со штатом Западная Виргиния (West Virginia), отколовшимся от Конфедерации; поэтому здесь и оказались пехотные полки Федеральной армии (см. ниже)

К с. 43

Federal infantry — пехота Федерального правительства (Союза), т. е. армии северян

К с. 44

He ... had known such ease and cultivation and high living — зд. На его долю выпала такая беззаботная обеспеченная жизнь и такое воспитание. Слово “cultivation” употреблялось в то время в значении «хорошее воспитание», «интеллект».

Union regiment — полк армии Союза, т. е. северян

К с. 46

cocked the piece — взвел курок (своего ружья)

К с. 47

he must be sent to his account (*эвф.*) — его следует отправить держать отчет = отправить на тот свет (см. коммент. к с. 185)

К с. 49

half believing himself the chosen scribe of some new Apocalypse — *зд.* почти поверив в то, что судьба избрала его летописцем какого-то нового Апокалипсиса. Апокалипсис — одна из книг Нового Завета (см. тж. коммент. к с. 460) — содержит откровения о судьбах мира, пророчества о конце света.

AN OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE

К с. 53

cross-timber — перекладина

“support” (*воен., ист.*) — на плечо

“parade rest” (*воен.*) — «вольно, по-парадному» (строевая стойка)

К с. 54

he — в английском языке при персонификации **death** относится к мужскому роду

in the hemp — *зд.* в петле

К с. 57

a politician — зд. указание на то, что в середине XIX в., когда между сторонниками и противниками рабства велись бесконечные дебаты, многие рабовладельцы занимались политической деятельностью

an original secessionist — т. е. принадлежал к наиболее давним сторонникам откола (от Союза). Штат Алабама, в котором находилась плантация главного действующего лица, явился одним из семи штатов, отделившихся от Союза в начале февраля 1861 г., когда в г. Монтгомери состоялся конгресс, провозгласивший Конфедерацию Американских Штатов.

the fall of Corinth — падение Коринфа, города в штате Миссисипи, захваченного войсками северян в 1862 г.; американцы часто называли свои населенные пункты в честь городов Старого Света; см., например, Нью-Йорк и Ньюкасл (штат Вайоминг), Ньюкасл (Индиана), Ньюкасл (Пенсильвания), Нью-Лондон и Манчестер (Коннектикут), Одесса (Техас), Александрия (Виргиния), Мемфис (Теннесси), и в данном случае город назван в честь древнегреческого полиса Коринф на п-ве Пелопоннес

all is fair in love and war (посл.) — в любви и на войне все средства хороши

К с. 58

student of hanging — зд. ГОТОВЫЙ к тому, что он может быть повешен

ЧИКАМАУГА

К с. 68

Chickamauga [tʃikə' mgə:g] — Чикамога, небольшой городок в штате Джорджия вблизи р. Чикамога-крик; здесь в 1863 г. во время битвы за Чаттанугу, железнодорожный узел и порт на р. Теннесси, северян встретила сильная армия южан под командованием Бракстона Брагга (Brackston Bragg, 1817-1876), которая сначала одержала победу, но в конце концов была разбита войсками Джорджа Томаса (George Thomas, 1816-1870), генерала-виргинца, оставшегося верным Союзу

К с. 69

for this child's spirit — пример типичной для того времени риторики

the capital of a civilized race to the far South — имеется в виду крупнейший и богатейший город Юга — Новый Орлеан, который в 1803 г. был продан американцам Наполеоном вместе с территорией Луизиана

К с. 70

the mightiest (conqueror) — по-видимому, здесь имеется в виду Александр Македонский (356—323 до н. э.), своими завоеваниями создавший крупнейшую мировую монархию древности

К с. 71

sobbed himself to sleep — плакал, пока не заснул; типичная для английского языка конструкция с возвратным местоимением при глаголе (обычно непереходном) + инфинитив или прилагательное, означающая «доводить себя до какого-либо состояния»; ср. **read himself to sleep** — читал, пока не заснул, заснул с книгой; **cried himself hoarse** — орал до хрипоты и т. д.

К с. 75

“the thunder of the captains and the shouting” — «громкие голоса вождей и крик» (Иов. 39:25)

ONE OF THE MISSING

К с. 79

General Sherman — Уильям Текумсе Шерман (1820—1891), американский генерал; в Гражданской войне командовал армией северян; в настоящем рассказе речь идет о том периоде, когда он в 1864 г. приступил к кампании для овладения побережьем Джорджии

Kennesaw ['kenəsɔ:] Mountain, Georgia — Кеннесо-маунтин, одинокая вершина высотой ок. 600 м. на северо-западе штата Джорджия, место одной из битв Гражданской войны во время наступления северян на г. Атланту (см. коммент. к с. 103), которая сдалась северянам в сентябре 1864 г.

К с. 80

being borne upon the rolls — числится в списках части

К с. 83

globe sight (воен.) — сферическая мушка

К с. 84

the Power — имеется в виду Провидение, божественная сила

New Orleans (instead of New York) — здесь обыгрывается слово new: судьбе угодно было распорядиться так, что, когда артиллерист бежит в Новый Свет, он попадает в Новый Орлеан, а не в Нью-Йорк и, таким образом, оказывается в армии южан

К с. 85

The shot flew high of its mark — пуля прошла выше цели

К с. 86

conscious of his rathood — сознавая свою крысиную сущность; окказиональное слово **rathood** образовано по продуктивной модели «основа существительного + суффикс **hood** = отвлеченное существительное со значением состояние или положение», см., например, **childhood**, **manhood** и т. п.; продуктивность этой модели позволяет образовывать **invalidhood**, **tabbyhood**, **fairyhood** и пр. окказиональные, т. е. авторские, слова, не получившие статуса общенародных

К с. 87

athwart — зд. лежащее поперек

К с. 89

the storming of Missionary Ridge — штурм Мишинери-Риджа, горного кряжа между штатами Теннесси и Джорджия, относится к заключительной фазе сражения за Чаттанугу (см. коммент. к с. 68)

grape = **grape-shot** — крупная картечь

К с. 93

unfix — зд. отвести, оторвать (взгляд)

К с. 95

intenser = **more intense**; употребление суффик-

сальной формы сравнительной степени, по-видимому, считалось во времена Бирса допустимым, т. е. не противоречило норме, которая в настоящее время требует аналитической формы для степеней сравнения многослоговых прилагательных; см. ниже *the beautifullest fight*

KILLED AT RESACA

К с. 99

“the speaking trump of fame” — урезанная цитата из сатиры Джорджа Байрона «Английские барды и шотландские обозреватели» (*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809): “Oh Amos Cottle—Phoebus what a name to fill the speaking trump...” — «О, Амос Коттль! Какое имя Фэб! Как наполнит оно звучную трубу (будущей славы)»; Амос Коттль (1768?—1800), автор двух эпических поэм «Альфред» и «Падение Камбрии», переводчик Эдды

the engagement at Stone’s River — битва при Стоунз-ривер; Стоунз-ривер, приток реки Камберлэнд в штате Теннесси; здесь вблизи Нэшвилла (см. коммент. к с. 170) произошло сражение, с которого началось наступление северян на Чаттанугу; в настоящее время национальный заповедник «Поле сражения при Стоунз-ривер»

К с. 101

on a keen run — зд. очень быстро; **keen run** = бодрый, быстрый бег

К с. 102

canister = canister-shot — картечь

К с. 103

the taking of Atlanta — имеется в виду взятие войсками северян под командованием генерала Шермана (см. коммент. к с. 79) Атланты, столицы штата Джорджия (сентябрь 1864 г.)

К с. 105

topographical engineer = topographer

К с. 106

Russia-leather — юфта

THE COUP DE GRÂCE

К с. 114

unheroic Prometheus [prə' mi:θju:s] — В соответствии с одним из вариантов древнегреческого мифа Зевс повелел приковать Прометея к скале, куда каждое утро прилетал орел и клевал печень титана; автор отказывает сержанту в героизме, потому что, будучи не в силах терпеть боль, тот молит о смерти.

the whole non-ego — зд. все то, что находилось вне него самого

PARKER ADDERSON, PHILOSOPHER

К с. 120

Their disposition I already knew. It is morose. — зд. Их нрав мне уже известен. Мрачные люди. Здесь игра слов, основанная на разных значениях слова *disposition*: «характер» и *воен.* «дислокация, расположение».

“wall tent” (*воен.*) — палатка с вертикальными стенками

Confederate simplicity and penury of “pomp and circumstance” — зд. простота жизни в армии Конфедерации и отсутствие пышности и блеска, ассоциирующихся с победоносными войнами; автор использует слова из монолога Отелло: “Farewell... / The royal banner, and all quality, / Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!” (Shakespeare. *Othello*, III, 3) — «О прощай... царственное знамя и все достоинства — великолепие, пышность, блестящий церемониал славных войн» (пер. М. М. Морозова)

К с. 121

ducked himself out of the tent — нагнувшись, вышел из палатки; *duck* (*букв.*) — быстро наклон-

нить голову; в данной конструкции глагол, наряду со своей обычной функцией, приобретает функцию обстоятельства образа действия; ср. *he fumed out of the room* — шипя от гнева, он вышел из комнаты и т. п.

К с. 124

Yankee — янки; во времена Гражданской войны по аналогии с жителями Новой Англии (штаты на северо-востоке США) так называли северян вообще

AN AFFAIR OF OUTPOSTS

К с. 132

battle at Pittsburg Landing — К апрелю 1862 г. армия северян под командованием генерала Гранта вклинилась приблизительно на двести миль в район южной Конфедерации; здесь южане стремительной атакой застигли армию Гранта врасплох в местечке Питтсбург-Лендинг на р. Теннесси; это нападение было приостановлено подошедшими к Гранту подкреплениями (см. коммент. ниже), и южане были вынуждены отойти назад к Коринфу (см. коммент. к с. 57).

К с. 133

Grant — Улисс Симпсон Грант (1822—1885), с начала 1864 г. — главнокомандующий армиями

северян; впоследствии — президент США (1869—1877)

Buell — Дон Карлос Бьюэлл, генерал, командовавший северным народным ополчением и оказавший поддержку Гранту в битве при Питтсбург-Лендинге (см. выше)

Halleck — Генри Уэйджер Халлек (1815—1872); с июля 1862 г. по март 1864 г. главнокомандующий армией северян

“excursions and alarums” (уст.) — волнение, движение и шум; выражение дается в кавычках, т.к. стало устойчивой сценической ремаркой

К с. 135

a few played at cards — несколько человек перебрасывались в карты; здесь предлог подчеркивает ленивый, неторопливый характер игры; ср. *to pick at the strings of the banjo* — время от времени пощипывать струны банджо; *to pick at one's food* — ковырять еду и т.п.

К с. 137

thankful for the boon of breath — благодарные за то, что им была дарована возможность дышать

К с. 138

be spared to his country — будет спасен, чтобы и дальше служить своей стране

К с. 140

with a clubbed rifle — прикладом ружья

К с. 141

all told — всего

К с. 143

the beautifulest fight — см. коммент. к с. 95

К с. 144

it would bleed — здесь имеется в виду поверие, согласно которому, когда убийца прикасается к трупам своей жертвы, тот начинает кровоточить

THE STORY OF A CONSCIENCE

К с. 146

“butternut” — зд. скорлупка (букв. орех серый калифорнийский)

ailing — зд. сильно поношенные, разваливающиеся

‘Lowed you’d rec’lect me, Ginerall’ — Я думал, вы меня узнаете, генерал. В этом рассказе Бирс стремится передать на письме фонетические отклонения диалектных и просторечных оборотов, находящихся за пределами литературной нормы: (а) диерезу в начале слова (‘lowed = allowed; см.

ниже 'ere = here), в середине слова (rec'lect = recollect; см. ниже pertickler = particular), в конце слова (см. ниже ye' = you); (б) замену звука [e] звуком [i] (gineral), звука [ə] звуком [ə:] (pertickler); (в) появление энентетического [r] (parss = pass) и т. д. (см. ниже purty = pretty, mout = might); в речи данного персонажа встречаются и лексические отклонения от нормы, см., например, you-all = you, характерное для южного просторечья; disremembered = зд. забыл.

К с. 147

Captain Hartroy held an independent command — у капитана Хартроя было отдельное подразделение

К с. 148

a field officer's command held by a line officer — должность старшего офицера, которую занимал строевой офицер; в американской армии старшими офицерскими считаются чины от майора до полковника

ONE OFFICER, ONE MAN

К с. 158

was one of the first to take the field — одним из первых выступил в поход и начал боевые действия

GEORGE THURSTON

К с. 167

en bivouac (*фр.*) — зд. на отдыхе; *букв.* bivouac — бивак, место для отдыха вышедших из расположения частей

platting my surveys — зд. перенося на карту результаты моих съемок

К с. 168

entered in red — зд. записанные кровавыми буквами

field-piece — полевое орудие

К с. 170

Nashville, Tennessee — г. Нэшвилл, столица штата Теннесси; под натиском войск генерала Гранта южане оставили город в начале 1862 г.; затем Нэшвилл еще раз перешел к южанам, но в декабре 1864 г. южная армия в Нэшвилле почти целиком была уничтожена сильным ударом северян под командованием генерала Джорджа Томаса (см. коммент. к с. 68)

К с. 173

he — см. коммент. к с. 54.

THE MOCKING-BIRD

К с. 176

the memorable 6th April, at Shiloh — 6 апреля 1862 г. в закончившейся победой северян битве при Шайло (вблизи Питтсбург-Лендинга) обе стороны понесли тяжелые потери (северяне, например, потеряли убитыми и ранеными около 13 тыс. человек)

К с. 178

he had been a terror to the targets — он был грозой для мишеней (т.е. очень метко стрелял)

К с. 181

rills — зд. струйка

К с. 183

over-against the Enchanted Land — зд. в Волшебной стране детства

A RESUMED IDENTITY

К с. 185

risen from the dead, we await the call to judgment — согласно библейской легенде, когда

настанет конец света, все мертвые восстанут, чтобы предстать перед богом и дать ему отчет в своих грехах (день Страшного суда)

К с. 186

the battle of Gaines's Mill — битва при Гейнзмилл; одна из битв кампании 1862 г. в районе реки Чикахомини, закончившаяся победой армии южан

the surrender at Appomattox — Аппоматокс, населенный пункт в штате Виргиния, где 9 апреля 1865 г. южная армия под командованием генерала Роберта Ли капитулировала; тем самым был положен конец Гражданской войне

Sheridan and Pickett — Филип Генри Шеридан (1831—1888), командующий конницей северян; Джордж Эдвард Пикет (1825—1875), генерал-майор в армии южан

К с. 188

Stone's River battlefield — см. коммент. к с. 99

К с. 189

General Hazen — Уильям Бэбкок Хейзен (1830—1887), начальник связи армии северян

К с. 190

the loquacious barber of the Arabian Nights — имеется в виду один из персонажей сборника арабских сказок, известного у нас под названием «Тысяча и одна ночь»

К с. 192

would soon be “one with Nineveh and Tyre” — вскоре превратится в развалины, будет как Ниневия и Тир; Ниневия, древняя столица Ассирии, разрушенная в 612 г. до н. э.; Тир, город-государство в Финикии, основан в 4-м тысячелетии до н. э.; цитата представляет собой строку из стихотворения Р. Киплинга «Последнее песнопение» (*Recessional*): “Lo, all our pomp of yester year / Is one with Nineveh and Tyre.”

JUPITER DOKE, BRIGADIER-GENERAL

Комментарии к данному произведению нуждаются в кратком введении, поскольку стилистические особенности этого рассказа отличают его от других военных рассказов, включенных в настоящий сборник.

В конце 50-х — начале 60-х гг. XIX в. в Америке сложилось юмористическое направление, получившее в американском литературоведении название «литературных комедиантов» (*Literary Comedians*). Их характеризовала виртуозная игра

с языком, пристрастие к каламбурам, намеренно искаженным цитатам, пародирование особенностей литературно-книжного слога. Одним из таких «литературных комедиантов» был Роберт Генри Ньюэлл (1836—1901), который прославился как создатель литературной маски Орфея С. Керра (Orpheus C. Kerr — читается как office-seeker — «искатель выгодных государственных должностей»), участника войны Севера с Югом и автора вымышленных писем в нью-йоркские газеты с театра военных действий. Эти письма пародировали газетные репортажи военных корреспондентов. В «Джупитере Доуке» Бирс весьма близок к манере Ньюэлла. Бирс доводит до абсурда типичные особенности американской публичной речи. Он пользуется такими риторическими приемами, как (а) аллюзия (часто намеренно искаженная); (б) цитация; (в) пышные эпитеты, метафоры, сравнения и пр.; например, to lay the axe at the root of the tree of liberty; shall labor so to discharge it (my duty) as to leave no blot upon my political escutcheon; to thunder at the gates of Disunion; (г) значащие имена, выдержанные в духе американского народного юмора XVIII—XIX вв.; например, имя самого героя, в котором высмеивается любовь американцев к возвышенным и звучным именам; отсюда сочетание звучного Jupiter и простого Doke, ассоциирующееся с John Doe — любой человек; ср. русск. Иванов, Петров, Сидоров; см. др. соб-

ственные имена: Blount Wardorg, звучащее одновременно возвышенно и воинственно; города: Hardpan (слово имеет два значения: (1) основа; (2) самый низкий уровень); Distilleryville (= город спирто-водочных заводов); провинциальность упоминаемых местечек подчеркивается их названиями: Opossum Corners, Horsecave

К с. 193

Hon. (сокр.) = Honorable — почтенный (ставится перед именем)

К с. 194

“My country, my whole country and nothing but my country” — моя родина, вся моя родина и ничего кроме моей родины; здесь перефразируется формула принятия присяги (заявление принявшего присягу выступающего): «клянусь говорить правду, всю правду и ничего, кроме правды» (“the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but truth”)

К с. 196

Esq. (сокр.) = Esquire — эсквайр; титул учтивости, заимствованный из Великобритании в качестве синонима слову «джентльмен»; в настоящее время употребляется довольно редко

К с. 197

Patrick Henry — Патрик Генри (1736—1799), политический деятель эпохи Войны за независимость; в 1776 г. был избран губернатором штата Виргиния; адвокат по профессии, получил известность как великолепный оратор

mileage account — счет на выплату подорожных

К с. 198

tented field — зд. расположение войск

К с. 199

Henry Clay...the late far-seeing statesman — Генри Клей (1777—1852), американский государственный деятель; во время президентства Джона Куинси Адамса (1825—1829) государственный секретарь

Posey “Maverick” — вымышленное название газеты вымышленного города Поузи

vital issues — зд. потомство

К с. 200

a division of the loaves and fishes — зд. отторгли у нас съестные припасы; здесь ассоциация с библ. «хлебами и рыбами» (см. Евангелие от Матфея)

the Territory of Idaho — Территориями назывались земли, входившие в состав Соединенных

Штатов, но еще не получившие статус штата. Так, территория Вермонт стала штатом в 1791 г., Кентукки — в 1792 г., Теннесси в 1796 г. и т. д. Территория Айдахо образована в 1863 г., а в 1890 г. стала 43-им штатом страны.

К с. 201

countertempus (*искаж. фр.*) = contretemps — непредвиденное осложнение

accidents by flood and field — горестные события, вызванные наводнениями и сражениями

К с. 203

ult. (*сокр. лат.*) = ultimo — прошлого, истекшего месяца

from the resident democracy — зд. у местных жителей

C.S.A. (*сокр.*) = Chief of Staff, Army

THE MAN AND THE SNAKE

К с. 207

It is of veritabyll...hys byte — Текст написан на ранненовоанглийском языке со всеми особенностями орфографии и грамматики того времени: It is a veritable report and attested to by so many

that no wise and learned man will gainsay it that the eye of a serpent has such a magnetic property that whoever falls under its spell is drawn forwards despite his will and perishes miserably by the bite of the creature; Бирс подражает «научным» трактатам того времени. Ср. эпиграф к рассказу *The Death of Halpin Frazer*; см. тж. вымышленные названия *Morryster's Marvells of Science*; в рассказе *A Psychological Shipwreck* — Denneker's Meditations.

К с. 210

“dragons of the prime” — дракон водяной (противопоставляется дракону летучему (dragon); prime употреблено Бирсом в редком значении «вода»

. **Zola of zoology** — здесь подчеркивается стремление Золя как натуралиста рассматривать социальные явления и человека как продукты естественно-биологических отношений

К с. 214

the sunrise melody of Memnon's statue — именем Мемнона, сына богини утренней зари, греки называли статую египетского фараона Аменхотепа III, которая при восходе солнца издавала жалобный звук, напоминавший человеческий голос; считалось, что это Мемнон приветствует свою мать

Nileside — зд. растущий на берегу Нила

К с. 216

ophiophagus [oufiəfægəs] (зоол) — офиофаг, т. е. питающийся змеями

THE DEATH OF HALPIN FRAYSER

К с. 218

lich (арх.) — тело мертвеца

For by death...by death evil altogether — Текст написан в соответствии с нормами ранненовоанглийского периода развития языка, однако более позднего времени, чем текст, приводимый в новелле *The Man and the Snake* (см. коммент. к с. 207).

Hali — вымышленный автор трактата

К с. 219

came to his death by exposure — зд. погиб от холода; exposure — существительное со сложным значением — любое, чаще опасное, соприкосновение с атмосферными явлениями; to die of exposure в зависимости от ситуации может означать «погибнуть от холода, замерзнуть (в горах и пр.), погибнуть в пустыне (от солнца), в воде (от переохлаждения)» и т. п.; в медицине an exposure case означает «пострадавший от атмосферных условий»; в данном случае имеется в виду то, что герой спал в лесу на сырой земле

manzanita [mænzə'ni:tə] (бот.) — толокнянка дубильная, вечнозеленый кустарник, растущий в основном на тихоокеанском побережье Америки

К с. 223

one-half of which was leaved fer memoranda — половина которого представляла собой записную книжку (с отрывными листами)

К с. 224

the twig...rilling blood without renewal — ветка сама сочилась кровью, ее не требовалось обматывать

Frayser père (фр.) — Фрейзер-отец, Фрейзер старший

К с. 225

in him the character of the late Myron Bayne... had revisited the glimpses of the moon — он унаследовал от покойного Майрона Бэйна одну черту — страсть к созерцанию луны (букв. через него покойный Майрон Бэйн снова созерцал луну)

of no small Colonial distinction — зд. достаточно известный в английских колониях в Северной Америке

К с. 226

he could not have written correctly a line of verse to save himself from the Killer of the Wise — зд. даже под угрозой смертной казни он не мог бы правильно написать ни одной поэтической строки: the Killer of the Wise = смерть

the young man was rather a loose fish — зд. молодой человек ничем не интересовался

К с. 230

An appeal will not lie (юр.) — апелляция не может быть принята

К с. 232

trees were adrip with moisture — с деревьев капало

К с. 233

“laid for him” — устроил ему засаду

got the drop on me—regularly held me up and made me travel. It’s God’s mercy that he didn’t go through me — он меня обошел — заставил отступить буквально под дулом оружия. Слава богу, что он еще не выстрелил.

К с. 234

a more unshaven, unshorn, unkempt and uneverything wretch I never saw — более небри-

того, нестриженого, неухоженного, не ... — можете прибавить что хотите — мерзавца я еще не встречал; *uneverything* — обобщенное выражение отрицания, образованное от основы причастия, подтверждает абсолютную продуктивность префикса *un-* (например, *undo*, *unlock* и пр.) не только с глагольными, но и с именными основами

I've gone in for him (*разг.*) — зд. Я взялся за его поимку

this side of the Mountains of the Moon — в наших краях; *букв.* по эту сторону Лунных гор; так в древности назывался горный массив Рувензори в центральном районе Африки на границе Конго и Уганды; считалось, что там берет свое начало Нил.

К с. 236

leaving “a large circle of sorrowing friends” — оставив после себя множество безутешных друзей — клише, типичное для некролога

К с. 238

He had a rough deal. (*разг.*) — Ну и досталось ему.

THE SECRET OF MACARGER'S GULCH

К с. 243

chemisal — густой кустарник, цветущий мелкими белыми цветами

К с. 253

boneplate — Морган в шутку называет сосуд для мытья рук сосудом для костей. т. к. Элдerson от волнения бросает туда косточки; **boneplate** — окказионализм, слово придуманное автором.

MOXON'S MASTER

К с. 259

Herbert Spencer — Герберт Спенсер (1820—1903), английский философ и социолог, один из родоначальников позитивизма

He may have altered it afterward, for anything I know — Я не знаю, может быть, он потом изменил его; **for anything (all) I know** обычно выражает незнание; см., например, **for anything (all) I know, he may be here** — может быть, он и здесь, я не знаю (откуда мне знать)

К с. 260

Life is a definite combination of ... sequences — Жизнь есть определенное сочетание разнородных

изменений, вместе одновременных и последовательных, в соответствии с внешними существованиями и последовательностями (Основания биологии. Спб., 1870, с. 52).

Mill — Джон Стюарт Милль (1806—1873), английский философ-позитивист, логик, экономист; разработал методы индуктивного исследования причинной связи

К с. 263

light...which fell upon Saul of Tarsus — свет с неба, который осиял Савла Тарсянина (позднее апостол Павел); согласно библейской легенде, Савлу, шедшему в Дамаск, явился Иисус Христос и ослепил его своим сиянием (Деяния святых апостолов, 9)

Lewes ['lu:is] — Джордж Генри Луис (1817 — 1878), английский философ и литературный критик

A PSYCHOLOGICAL SHIPWRECK

К с. 273

Denneker's "Meditations" — см. коммент. к с. 207

go foreappointed ways — следуют предопределенным им путем

К с. 274

ditto lunatic, Mr. William Jarrett — зд. а также один сумасшедший по имени Уильям Джаретт

К с. 276

It's a rum lot — зд. странная книга

JOHN BARTINE'S WATCH

К с. 278

while his brilliant conversational gifts were commending themselves to my inattention — в то время, как я пропускал мимо ушей перлы его красноречия; здесь деформация в стилистических целях традиционного сочетания commend oneself to smb's attention

К с. 280

King George — Георг III (1738—1820), король Великобритании, в правление которого (с 1760 г.) из восставших североамериканских колоний образовались Соединенные Штаты

К с. 283

monomania — мономания, патологическая одержимость одной идеей

К с. 284

vraisemblance (*фр.*) — правдоподобие

К с. 285

when John Bartine rises we shall all rise — *зд.* он был мертв; *букв.* когда Джон Бартайн встанет, мы все восстанем (*библ. аллюзия на день Страшного суда; см. коммент. к с. 185*)

THE DAMNED THING

К с. 289

would hardly have passed muster — *зд.* вряд ли посчитали приличным

К с. 290

manifold paper (*уст.*) — копировальная бумага

К с. 295

extravasated blood (*мед.*) — гематома, кровоизлияние

К с. 296

yer (*прост.*) = your

К с. 297

The book will cut no figure in this matter — Книга не будет фигурировать в этом деле

THE STRANGER

К с. 303

tortion = torsion

К с. 304

Gulf — имеется в виду Калифорнийский залив (Gulf of California) между полуостровом Калифорния и северо-западной Мексикой

arroyo [ə' rɔiəu] — сухое речное русло

Apaches [ə' pætʃi:z] — апачи, племя североамериканских индейцев

К с. 306

Señores, I know not well... — Сеньоры, я не очень хорошо знаю... мексиканец Рамон Галлегос говорит по-английски без соблюдения грамматических правил

beat the game of the Apache — зд. перехитрить апачей

Madre de Dios (исп.) — мать божья

A WIRELESS MESSAGE

К с. 312

“dumfounded” = dumbfounded — ошеломленный

THE HYPNOTIST

К с. 319

the road between Succotash Hill and South Asphyxia — ироническая направленность рассказа, которая достигает своего апогея в заключительном его предложении, подчеркивается вымышленными названиями, которые имеют общеязыковые значения, несовместимые с топонимией: Succotash — похлебка из кукурузы и бобов; Asphyxia — удушье; см. ниже название судебных инстанций Court of Technicalities and Continuances и Court of Remandment for New Trials

К с. 321

Gettysburg — Геттисберг, город на юге штата Пенсильвания; здесь 3 июля 1863 г. армия северян под командованием генерала Джорджа Мида (1815—1872) отразила наступление южан под командованием генерала Роберта Ли (1807—1870); сражение, ставшее переломным в ходе Гражданской войны и заложившее основы успеха армии Севера

Waterloo — Ватерлоо, населенный пункт на территории современной Бельгии, южнее Брюсселя; здесь 16 июня 1815 г. англо-голландскими войсками под командованием герцога Веллингтона и прусскими войсками под командованием генерала Блюхера была разгромлена армия Наполеона

THE BOARDED WINDOW

К с. 323

unbroken forest — зд. нехоженный лес

К с. 324

by right of undisturbed possession — по праву собственности, на которую никто не претендует

penitential ashes — библейская аллюзия: кающиеся грешники, посыпавшие себя пеплом в знак скорби

“chinking” of clay — зд. замазка из глины для щелей (chinks)

A JUG OF SYRUP

К с. 332

Salem — Салем, город в штате Массачусетс, прославившийся «охотой за ведьмами» (witch hunts); здесь во второй половине XVII в. судили и сжигали людей, заподозренных в колдовстве и сношении с нечистой силой

К с. 335

a vestigial polytheism forbids the taking in vain of the Evil One's name — следы бывшего многобожия запрещают упоминать имя дьявола всуе; здесь намек на дьяволопоклонство и ведовство

(см. пред. коммент.) и перефразированное устойчивое словосочетание библейского происхождения «не произносить имени господа твоего напрасно» (Исход, 20)

К с. 338

en bloc [en 'blɔk] (*фр.*) — целиком, оптом

THE DIFFICULTY OF CROSSING A FIELD

К с. 344

“**pike**” — зд. «заставная»; от turnpike (*букв.*) — дорога с заставой, где взимается подорожный сбор; впоследствии это слово стало употребляться в значении «большая мощеная дорога»

К с. 345

sic (*лат.*) — так! (указание на точное соответствие факту)

FABLES

К с. 350

Salvation Army — Армия Спасения; международная благотворительная организация, основанная в 1865 г. английским евангелистом Уильямом Бутом (1829—1912); его дочь Эванжелин Кори (1865—1950) стала впоследствии во главе американской Армии Спасения

К с. 352

Apple of Discord... Bone of Contention — устойчивые сочетания, ставшие избитыми штампами со сходным значением — яблоко раздора, предмет вожделений

К с. 353

Shikane County — сатирический смысл данной басни подчеркивается названием округа, произношение которого совпадает с Chicane [ʃiˈkeɪn] — крючоктворство

state convention — зд. съезд представителей какой-либо партии для выдвижения кандидатов на выборные посты в администрации штата.

make...solid for—for the present administration — зд. убедить единогласно голосовать за нынешнюю администрацию

Night Chaplain and Reminder of Mothers and Sisters — вымышленная должность, подчеркивающая сатирический характер басни

К с. 354

her good man — ее супруг; употребление прилагательного good в подобных случаях имеет стилистическую функцию — носит архаический (ср. goodman *шотл. уст.* — муж) или иронический характер (особенно в обращении, см. my good sir — мой дорогой сэръ, your good wife — ваша

милая жена; ср. *русск.* моя дражайшая половина и т. п.)

The Bumbo of Jiam — Бумбо, правитель Джама; комический эффект словосочетания (как и многих других словосочетаний и слов в этой и следующих баснях) достигается ассоциативностью придуманных названий; ср. Bumbo и Mumbo-Jumbo — африканский идол; здесь, кроме того, Bumbo ассоциируется по звучанию с сущ. bump — шишка; Gookul (ср. Mogul — могол) — неограниченный, единоличный правитель и Великий Могол, завоеватель Индии; ср. тж. goof — тулица, дуралей; то же в других баснях: the Gamdoodle of Moop, Bumboogle, Gaaka-Wolwol, Gowk, High Noble Toby и др.

The Pahdour of Patagascar and the Gookul of Madagonia — здесь комический эффект достигается также и (см. пред. коммент.) перестановкой слогов в двух словах одновременно: Madagascar, Patagonia (своеобразная метатеза)

К с. 356

A Little Learning — название представляет собой начало строки из стихотворного произведения английского поэта Александра Попа (Alexander Pope, 1688-1744) «Опыт о критике» (*Essay on Criticism*, 1711): “A little learning is a dang’rous thing...”

Commit no mythology — не совершай мифологии; комизм основан на нарушении норм сочетаемости основного значения глагола **commit** — совершать (чаще дурное); напр., **commit a crime**, **commit a murder** и т. п.

builded = built

К с. 357

Reports? — зд. игра слов, основанная на омонимии **report** (1) — звук выстрела и **report** (2) — сообщение, молва

К с. 365

proboscidae [prə' bəsiði] — хоботное животное

К с. 381

February 16, 1893. California settled by the Christians — здесь ирония заключается в том, что христианином называется человек, повешенный за преступление; фактически первые миссионеры-христиане появились в Калифорнии в 1769 г.

К с. 382

smugged — самодовольно усмехнулся; глагол **to smug** образован по конверсии от основы прилагательного **smug** — самодовольный

К с. 384

I do not sit today as a committing magistrate — здесь игра слов, основанная на значении слова **commit** — заключать (в тюрьму и т. п.); **committing magistrate** — судья, выносящий решение о взятии под стражу, и т. п. и **commiting magistrate** (= **committor**) — судья, назначающий опекуна над душевнобольными

К с. 387

Proboscidians — см. коммент. к с. 365

К с. 390

Sheik — здесь игра слов, основанная на омофонии слов **sheik** — «шах» и **shake** — «пожать руку»

К с. 392

Grizzly Bearship — зд. должность медведя гризли

THE DEVILS'S DICTIONARY

К с. 397

adviseeth = **advises**; архаичная форма глагола (см. тж. ниже **hath** = **has**, **attaineth** = **attains**), а тж. характерные для канцелярского стиля архаизмы в виде составных местоимений (**whoso**), предлогов

(thereto) используются для достижения иронического эффекта. См. тж. whereby (в статье слова ABRACADABRA см. тж. слова INDECISION, WOMAN)

К с. 398

in night — *обыкн.* in the night или at night; здесь поэт. вольность

К с. 399

Jamrach Holobom — Как и в «Баснях», Бирс, наряду с использованием цитат из подлинных произведений, придумывает стихи и высказывания, которые он приписывает вымышленным поэтам, философам и пр., давая им имена, которые должны обратить внимание своей нелепостью (см. тж. ниже Booley Fito, Romach Pute, Orm Pludge, Jex Wopley, Stumpo Gaker и т. п.) или своей ассоциативной коннотацией (см., например, Jorace = Horace?; Apuleius M. Gokul; Judibras = Hudibras?; Borey the Bald — король Карл Лысый и т. п.), иногда связанной с национальными особенностями ономастики.

abridge — здесь игра слов, основанная на том, что значение «урезывать», реализующееся, как правило, в сочетании «урезывать права (в правах)», употребляется в прямом смысле — «делать короче, отрубив голову»

К с. 400

separation — здесь имеется в виду отделение головы от туловища; см. пред. коммент.

Oliver Cromwell — Оливер Кромвель (1599—1658), деятель Английской буржуазной революции, один из сторонников казни короля Карла I «как тирана, изменника, убийцы и врага государства»

Dr. Samuel Johnson — доктор Сэмюэль Джонсон (1709—1784), английский писатель и лексикограф, выпустивший в 1755 г. «Словарь английского языка», ему принадлежат многочисленные афористические высказывания

commonly — зд. вместе

К с. 402

Academe (др.-греч.) — Академы, сад близ Афин, где Платон обучал философии своих учеников

К с. 404

proof against bad-egging and dead-catting — зд. не реагирующий на то, что его забрасывают тухлыми яйцами и дохлыми кошками; *to bad-egg, to dead-cat* — окказиональные глаголы, созданные по продуктивной модели конверсии: именное словосочетание → глагол

К с. 406

Herodotus — Геродот (490—480 — ок. 425 до н. э.), древнегреческий историк

sawrian — принадлежащий к надотряду вымерших пресмыкающихся мезозойской эры (динозавры, бронтозавры, стегозавры и пр.)

К с. 408

arrested — здесь игра слов: согласно Библии, бог создал мир за шесть дней и отдохнул (and rested) на седьмой день

The Unauthorized Version — ироническая ассоциация с Authorised Version — переводом Библии на английский язык, изданным в 1611 г. и принятым в англиканской церкви

little Moses, from whose adventure in the bul-rushes... — имеется в виду библейское предание, по которому фараон велел бросать в реку всех новорожденных иудейских мальчиков; мать Моисея, решив спасти сына, оставила его в корзинке в тростнике у берега реки, где он был найден дочерью фараона и воспитан ею (Исход, 2)

hierophant — жрец в древней Греции

Osiris — Осириз (Озирис), древнеегипетское божество умирающей и воскресающей природы

Baby / The First had been eagled or condored — здесь игра слов, основанная на возможности толковать значения окказиональных глаголов *to eagle* и *to condor* (созданы по продуктивной модели конверсии: основа сущ.→глагол) как «унести» или «зачать» (от орла, кондора)

К с. 410

licitor — зд. страж порядка; в Древнем Риме ликторами назывались почетные стражи при высших должностных лицах

К с. 413

Zeno ... the great Stoic — великий стоик Зенон из Китиона (на о. Кипр) (ок. 336—264 до н.э.), древнегреческий философ, основавший в 308 г. до н.э. школу стоиков в Афинах

К с. 414

Calumnus — окказиональное слово, составленное автором из двух основ: *calumny* — клевета и *alumnus* (лат.) — бывший питомец, бывший студент, выпускник; такой способ производства новых слов (*blending*) достаточно продуктивен в настоящее время (ср. *brunch* = *breakfast* + *lunch*; *motel* = *motor(ist)* + *hotel* и т. п.)

К с. 415

Gabriel — архангел Гавриил, который, согласно Библии, трубным гласом поднимает мертвых в день Страшного суда; следует обратить внимание на рифму: Thomas M. and Mary Frazer. P. S.—Gabriel will raise her

К с. 417

Pauillac, 1873 — вино марки Пойлак разлива 73-го года

К с. 418

Cui bono (лат.) — Кому от этого польза?

К с. 425

he took the king's bread — зд. он пользовался гостеприимством короля

К с. 427

The cur foretells...in a minor key — пародия на начало «Элегии, написанной на сельском кладбище» (*Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*) английского поэта Томаса Грея (1716—1771): “The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,/The lowing herd winds slowly o’er the lea,/The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,/And leaves the world to darkness and to me.”

К с. 430

unfair, sex — здесь двойная игра слов: (1) обыкн. женщин называют the fair sex — «прекрасный пол»; (2) fair имеет значение «честный, справедливый»

Nero — Нерон (37—68), римский император, известный своей жестокостью, себялюбием, развращенностью; по преданию играл на лире во время пожара, который уничтожил почти весь Рим; глагол to fiddle означает «играть на смычковом инструменте»; фактически скрипка (fiddle) пришла в Европу с востока прибл. к 106 г. н. э.

К с. 431

omnific, omniform, omnipercipient, omniscient, omnipotent — всесоздающий, принимающий любую форму, все воспринимающий, всеведущий, всемогущий; последнее слово может означать тж. «способный на все»

such as creation's dawn beheld he fooleth now — здесь автор перефразирует строки из «Чайльд-Гарольда» Байрона: "Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow; / Such as creations dawn beheld, thou rollest now" (Byron. *Childe Harold*, IV)

К с. 434

some are seen to be very great geese indeed —

здесь игра слов, основанная на перен. значении слова *goose* — дурак, простофиля

К с. 438

saith Sir Thomas Brewbold, “there is...forwards” — см. коммент. к с. 207

К с. 439—440

divines...pumpums — в перечислении объектов поклонения «язычников» встречаются следующие, отсутствующие в Англо-русском словаре В. К. Мюллера слова: *mollah* — мулла; *hierophants* (см. коммент. к с. 408); *obeah-man* — *афр.* колдун, жрец; *abbe* — *фр.* аббат; *imaum* — *араб.* имам; *vicar-choral* — регент; *abbotess* — аббатиса; *caloyer* — монах восточной ортодоксальной церкви; *santon* — *исп.* марабут, дервиш, мусульманский святой; *hierarch* — иерарх, высший священнослужитель, в православии — архиерей; *capitular* — член церковного капитула; *talapoia* — буддийский монах или священник; *googo* — *инд.* *guru* — гуру, духовный руководитель, учитель; *fakeer* = *fakir*; *cenobite* — инок; *ulema* — *араб.* улемы, мусульманские ученые богословы в странах Ближнего и Среднего востока

К с. 443

Elizabethans — елизаветинцы, условное название английских писателей, особенно драматургов,

творивших в конце XVI — начале XVII вв., в последние 20 лет царствования Елизаветы I Тюдор и первое десятилетие царствования Якова I Стюарта; к ним относятся Спенсер, Марло, Шекспир и др.

К с. 444

Bacon — Фрэнсис Бэкон (1561—1626), английский философ-материалист; при короле Якове I был лордом-канцлером; основное произведение — трактат «Новый органон» (1620), где целью науки он провозгласил «увеличение власти человека над природой»

sweeter than honey and stronger than a lion — соединение двух усеченных цитат: “the ordinances of the Lord...are sweeter...than honey” (*Psalms*, 19:10) и “they were stronger than Lions” (*2 Samuel*, 1:20)

К с. 446

Noah Webster — Ной Уэбстер (1758—1843), американский лексикограф; родоначальник знаменитой серии словарей Мерриам Уэбстер

К с. 448

The objectionable case of I — игра слов, основанная на сходстве слов *objective* («косвенный па-

деж») и objectionable («нежелательный»); следует отметить, что в Америке употребление “me” в случаях типа “It is me” до последнего времени считалось отступлением от нормы

К с. 450

One whom we are commanded to love as ourselves — перефразирована библийская заповедь: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”

К с. 455

Dr. Johnson’s famous dictionary — см. КОММЕНТ.
К с. 400

К с. 456

There is no art...in the face — с небольшими искажениями используется цитата из шекспировского «Макбета»: “There is no art / To find the mind’s construction in the face” (*Macbeth*, I, 4)

К с. 457

Socrates — Сократ (470/469—399 до н.э.), древнегреческий философ, один из родоначальников диалектики; излагал свое учение устно; главный источник — сочинения его учеников Ксенофонта и Платона. Для последующих эпох имя Сократ стало символом мудреца.

К с. 460

Brewer — Эбинизер Брюэр (1810—1897), английский лексикограф, автор словарей и справочников, наиболее известный из которых — *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*

К с. 463

St. John the Divine — Иоанн Богослов, которому приписывается одна из книг Нового Завета «Откровение Иоанна Богослова» (см. тж. коммент. к с. 49)

К с. 466

repented in sashcloth and axes — комический эффект достигается приемом паронимазии, т.е. сближением в речи в стилистических целях слов, которые вследствие сходства в звучании и частичного совпадения морфемного состава могут использоваться каламбурно; ср. *repent in sackcloth and ashes*

К с. 466—467

a penny saved...there's a won't — здесь приводятся перефразированные в комических целях крылатые выражения, пословицы и поговорки: *A penny saved is a penny gained* (ср. копейка рубль бережет); *A man is known by the company he keeps* (ср. скажи мне, кто твои друзья, и я скажу, кто

ты); A bad workman quarrels with his tools (*ср.* дело мастера боится); A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush (*ср.* лучше синица в руках, чем журавль в небе); Better late than never (*ср.* лучше поздно, чем никогда); Follow a good example. Think twice before you act (*ср.* семь раз отмерь, один раз отрежь); What is worth doing is worth doing well (*ср.* взялся за гуж, не говори, что не дюж); Least said soonest mended (*ср.* меньше слов, а больше дела); He laughs better who laughs last (*ср.* хорошо смеется тот, кто смеется последний); Speak of the Devil and he is sure to appear (*ср.* легок на помине); Of the two evils choose the least (*ср.* из двух зол выбирай меньшее); Strike the iron while it is hot (*ср.* куй железо, пока горячо»; игра слов, основанная на двух омонимах strike — «бить, выбивать, чеканить» и strike — «бастовать»; Where there's a will there's a way (*ср.* где хотение, там и умение)

К с. 468

Pignoramus intolerabilis — свинтус невежественный, невыносимый — придуманный для комического эффекта ученый (латинского вида) классификационный термин, составленный из основ pig, ignoramus и intolerable

Augustine Nicholas — св. Августин Блаженный (312—386), христианский философ и богослов

when eaten...gratitude — имеется в виду, что в праздничные дни, особенно в «День благодарения», к столу подается жареная индейка; в США «День благодарения» — официальный праздник в память первых колонистов, высадившихся с корабля «Мейфлауэр» на территории нынешнего штата Массачусетс и обнаруживших, что Новый свет — богатый край; празднуется в четвертый четверг ноября

К с. 472

Andrew Carnegie — Эндрю Карнеги (1835—1919), американский промышленник и филантроп

brume — мгла, туман; здесь указание на то, что Карнеги родился в Шотландии и затем, уйдя от дел, снова там поселился

doff — сбрасывать с себя (одежду)

baubee = bawbee

К с. 474

postsusananthony period — в период после Сьюзен Энтони; Сьюзен Энтони (1820—1906), американская феминистка, одна из руководительниц движения суфражисток

from Greenland's spicy mountains to India's moral strand — сочетание искаженных строк из попу-

лярных во времена Бирса стихов и гимнов; ср. “India’s spicy shores” (Cowper, 1731-1800; *Charity*); “From Greenland’s icy mountains from India’s coral strand” (Bishop Reginald Heber, 1783-1826; *Hymns*)

Felis pugnans (лат.) — кошка драчливая, вымышленный зоологический термин

К с. 475

A passion that goeth before a sprawl — перепарафразировано библ. изречение “Pride goeth before a fall,” являющееся сокращением от “pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall” — «погибели предшествует гордость, и падению надменность» (Книга Притчей Соломоновых, 16: 18); ср. fall — падение и sprawl — неуклюжая поза

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Амброз Бирс

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(на английском языке)

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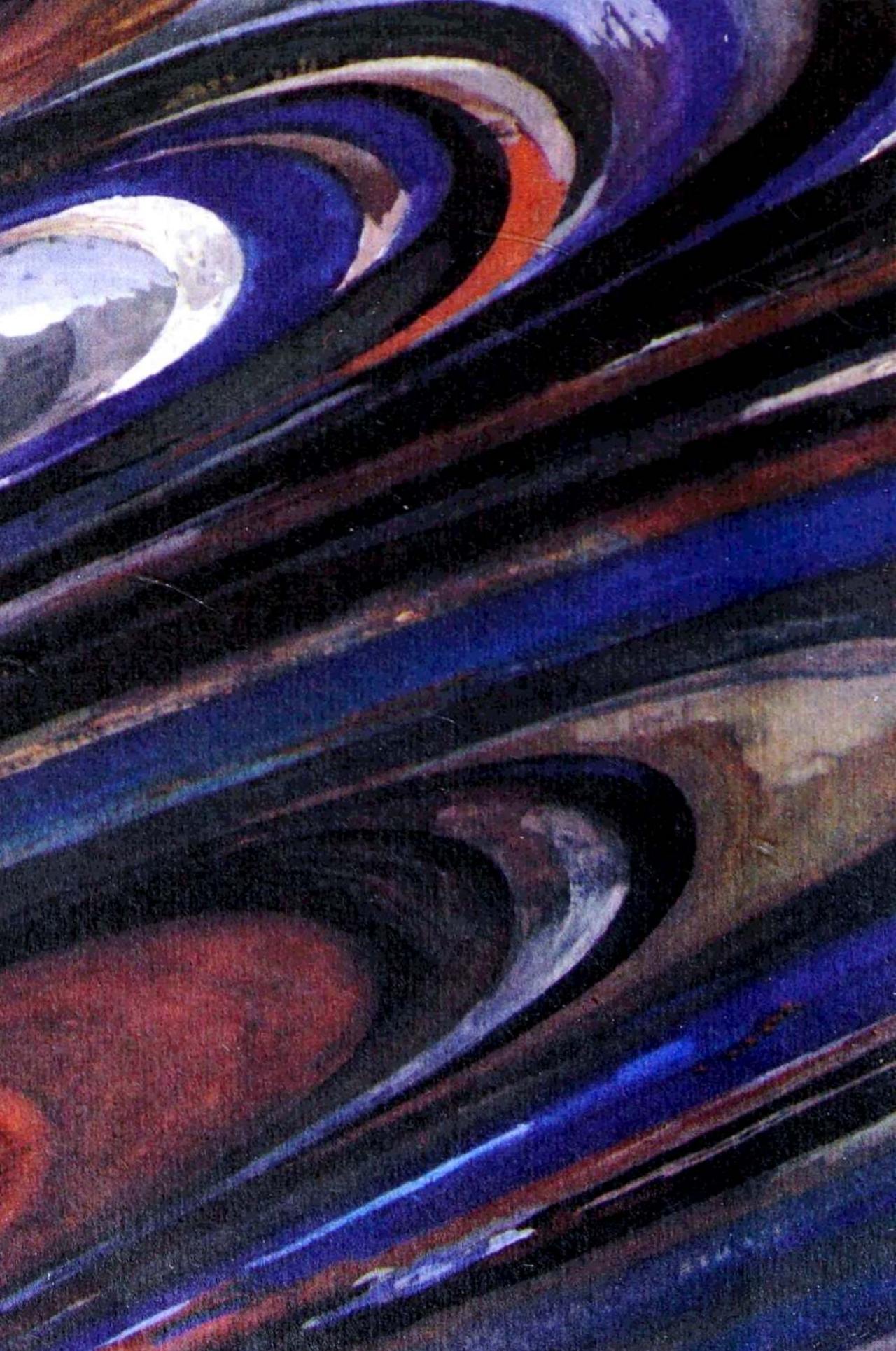
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